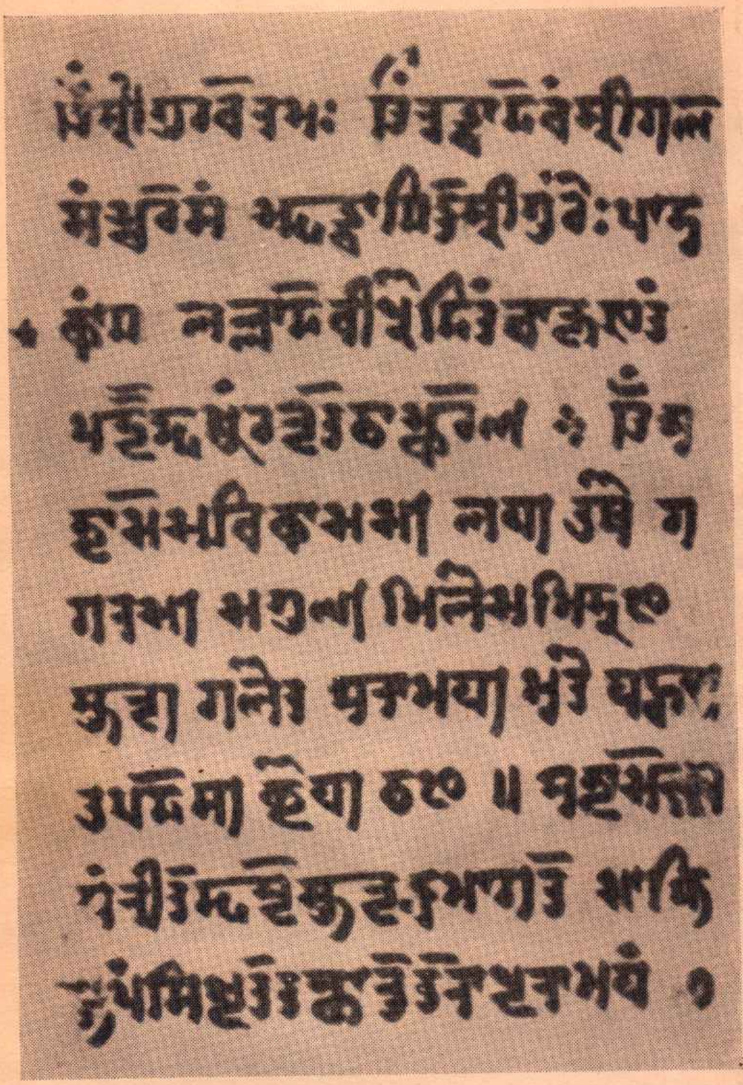
LAL DED

JAYALAL KAUL



Facsimile reproduction of a *Vaakh* from Bhaskara's *Lalla Vaakh*
(in Sharada script).

CONTENTS

PREFACE

A REAPPRAISAL of Lal Ded was overdue; and I am grateful to Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, for this opportunity to examine the legends that huddle her life story and generally to re-assess her work and significance. It has been a much tougher and more time-consuming job than I had bargained for. My researches have led me to correct many fond beliefs and opinions held about her. I have had sometimes to re-interpret the text and, at places, to set right the text itself. This applies even to *Lallā-Vākyāni* (1920) by Sir George Abraham Grierson and Lionel D. Barnett Litt. D., the only scholarly work on the subject up to date.

I gratefully acknowledge the help of Professor P.N. Pushp, who read chapters 1, 2, 4 and 5; of Dr. Balji Nath Pandit Ph. D., who not only read chapters 2 and 3 but spared time to discuss several points of Trikashāstra, theory and practice and located a few references; of Professor Mohi-ud-din Hajini, who read chapters 1 and 2. They made valuable suggestions. I must also record my thanks to Research Officers, Pandit Srikantha Kaul and Maulvi Muhammad Ibrahim, and to Sri Ghulam Rasool, Head Maulvi, of the Department of Research and Publications, Srinagar, for helping me to locate references in the Sanskrit and Persian manuscripts of the chronicles in

the Research Library. Lastly, I have to thank Dr. P. Machwe, who patiently bore with me even while tactfully prodding me to do the job which certainly needed to be done and which, I am happy, I have been able to do.

I dedicate the book to my father, Pandit Lal Kaul (1875-1950), who, in the words of Lal Ded, lived the life of a householder saint :

geh ba'zith ti akrayī

Despite householders' active life
Some, by their actions, are untouched.

J. L. KAUL

KEY TO PRONUNCIATION

THE *e* in 'Lal Ded' has the sound of *e* in 'bed' or 'beg'; in all other non-English words *e* has the sound of *a* in 'hay'. The long vowel *o* is sounded as in 'pole', and its short sound in Kashmiri words is represented by *o*', e. g., *o'n* (blind), *pro'n* (white). While the long *e* has the sound of *a* in 'hay', its short sound in Kashmiri words is indicated by *e*', e. g., *me*' (me), *she*' (six), *tse*' (to you). On the analogy of the Greek lenis (') representing "alif hamza", the vowel sound peculiar to Kashmiri is represented by *a*', e. g., *a'ch* (an eye), *la'r* (a house), which has the sound somewhat like *oe* ; and its long form, by *ā*', as in *ā's* (a mouth), *lā'r* (a cucumber). Likewise, the peculiar vowel sound as in *tu'r* (a rag), *khu'r* (a slip), which sounds somewhat like *ui*, is represented by *u*' ; and its long form, as in *tū'r* (cold) by *ū*'. The sound, somewhat like *e* in *bed, get*, is indicated by *ya* as *zyay* (tongue), *lyay* (lick) ; and the sound somewhat like *ua* in *quarrel*, by *wa* as in *dwad* (milk), *sway* (nettle), a dipthongization. Because *wa* is used in this context, *v* has been used as the consonant sound.

I have uniformly used *c* for *ch* sound, and *ch* for its aspirated form ; *ts* for the Kashmiri voiceless affricate, and *tsh* for its aspirated form, e. g., respectively, *tsāṭh* (disciple) and *gatsh* (go).

CHAPTER ONE

THE LIFE AND LEGEND OF LAL DED

Śamsāras āyas tapasī
Bodha-prakāsha lo'bum sahaz[1]

A *tapasvin*[2] into the world came I,
And *bodha* illumined my path to the Self.

"IN the cradle of the earth, absorbed in God, was she, Lalla 'Ārifa, constantly aware (of God). . . She was one of those who wander in the wilderness of love wailing and lamenting (for the Beloved); and she was a knower of the Path of the Valley of Truth (*haqq*). Shaikh Nasīr-ud-Dīn, a Proclaimer of Unity (*vahdat*), an expert in Gnosis, and the father of fakīrs (May his secrets be sanctified!), has written this in praise of her :

Passion for God set fire to all she had,
And from her heart rose clouds of smoke.

1. Sans. *sahaja*; adj., inborn, natural, easy; n., true nature, the nature of the Self, the true reality; used by Lal Ded as an epithet of the Supreme Siva, He who is the real and the true.
2. a) *tapasvin* : a devotee, an ascetic, one who has self-discipline;
   b) *bodha* : perception, intuitive apprehension; *jñāna*, the higher knowledge, derived from meditation on the one Universal Spirit; awakening to the truth.

Having had a draught of "ahd-e-alast"[1],
Intoxicated and drunk with joy was she.
One cup of this God-intoxicating drink
Shatters reason into bits.
A little drowsiness from it is headier than,
Intoxication from a hundred jars of wine.

"We are told, in *Tārīkh-i-Husainī*, the chronicle of Husain, that Sultan Alau-ud-din ascended the throne in 748 A. H./A. D. 1345 . . . That *Majnūn-i 'Āqila*[2] in her early years had been married to a certain man; and the members of his family were amazed to see her state. Her husband too was angry with her every now and then, not knowing the truth of her state. One day when she returned home from the river with the pitcher filled with water on her head, he struck it with a stick. The pitcher broke into pieces but the water stood frozen. From the same water a pond was formed which till now has not dried up. It is known as the Pond of Lalla. Since many of such incidents became known, she set her foot in the deserts and began her wanderings in wildernesses . . ."

So wrote Bābā Dāwūd Mishkātī in his *Asrār-ul-Abrār* (The Secrets of the Pious) written in A. D. 1654. This is the earliest recorded mention of Lal Ded, and as its name indicates, it is a hagiographical document rather than a chronicle. The much earlier Sanskrit chronicles do not make a mention of Lal Ded. Jonarāja (*d.* 1459) brought the earlier and more famous *Rājataranginī* of Kalhana from 1150-51 down to about the middle of Sultān Zainul Ābidīn's reign (1420-70). He makes a mention of *Malā Nūrdīn*, the chiefest guru of Muslims (*yāvanānām paramgurum*)[3], as having been put under restraint

1. The Holy Quran, VII, 172: *"alastu birabikum, qālū balā"* ("Am I not your Lord?" said God. "Yes," said they). This has been the compact between God and human souls which has acted powerfully as a strong intoxicating drink on her.
2. lit. Mad in love (of God) but having her wits about her, wide awake, wise. Here, Lal Ded.
3. DRAJ, 673.

during Sultan Ali Shah's reign[1]; but he does not make any mention of Lal Ded at all. Srīvara, whose *Jaina-Rājatarangini* chronicled the events from 1459 to 1486; Prājyabhaṭṭa, whose *Rājāvalipatākā*, now extinct, covered the period from 1486 to 1513; and his pupil Shuka, who brought his master's work down to A. D. 1586 — none of them has a word to say about her. Nor do the chronicles written in Persian[2] during the succeeding centuries till about 1746 make a mention of her.

It may be that all these were chronicles of kings and narratives of political events, and their scope was limited; nor were they history in the modern sense. That is why Kalhana's *Rājatarangini*, otherwise a remarkable document containing considerable material for a socio-economic survey of the times, does not mention either the rise of the Trika School of Saivism or any of its great preceptor-philosophers like Abhinavagupta. Or, may be, the Sanskrit chroniclers were disinclined to give Lal Ded a place in their books. She had thrown all conventional respectability to the winds and roamed careless of dress and decorum; she did not observe the formalities of ceremonial piety; she was vehemently critical of orthodoxy, its dogma and ritual, its hypocrisy and exclusiveness; and (what they would certainly not approve of) she spoke of the secret doctrine and its disciplines to all and sundry, disregarding the strict injunctions in behalf of *adhikārabheda*[3], in the vulgar tongue of the unlettered masses. Or, perhaps, as often happens, it took time for her teachings to gain ground and her fame to spread; and it was only long afterwards when she became quite a legend that chroniclers felt it necessary to find a place for her in their annals.

However that be, we have no record, contemporary or

1. A. D. 1413-19.
2. *Tārikhi Rashīdī* (A. D. 1546), Bahāristāni Shāhī (author unknown, A. D. 1614); *Tārīkhi Kashmir* (A.D. 1617-18), *Muntakhib-ul-Tawārīkh* (A. D. 1710), and *Navādiri Akhbār* (A. D. 1723). See Bibliography.
3. Difference in meditative possibilities as between people of varying mental and moral calibre.

near-contemporary, of Lal Ded in any chronicle or otherwise. It is only as late as about the middle of the eighteenth century that she begins to be taken notice of. Khwāja Muhammad 'Azam Dedamari[1] writes :

"Lalla 'Ārifa, a saintly mystic of the highest order, devoted to God, flourished during the reign of Sultan Alau-ud-Din.[2] In the early period of her life she was bound in wedlock, a prisoner of family life and household chores, but at the same time she became God-intoxicated and, having given herself up to a life of detachment and retirement, she passed sometime in seclusion away from the people. . . She passed away during the reign of Sultan Shihāb-ud-Din[3] . . ."

Abdul Wahāb Shāyiq, who wrote a chronicle of Kashmir in Persian verse, gives 735 A. H./A. D. 1334-35 as the date of Lal Ded's birth in a verse : *fazūn būd bar haft sad sī va panj.*[4] Muhammad Aslam Abu-al-Qāsim mentions her[5] in the famous anecdote about Prince Shihāb-ud-Din and the Yogini.[6] Bīrbal Kācru speaks[7] of her as "a saintly, chaste and pure-of-heart woman from the community of Hindus [who] had stepped up on the dais of Divine manifestation. She lived in the village of Pampor. . ." In the third volume of his chronicle[8], Pir Gulam Hasan writes :

"The saintly lady Lalla 'Ārifa, a mystic of the highest order, was a second Rābi'a and was brought to light in the

1. *Wāqi 'āti Kashmir* completed in A. D. 1746.
2. A. D. 1344-55.
3. A. D 1355-73.
4. *Tarikhi Shāyiq* written during the time of Sukhjīwan (1754-62), quoted by Sufi, Vol.II, p. 384.
5. The author of *Gauhari Ālam*, [who was the son of Maulvi Muhammad 'Azam Kaul and not of Muhammad 'Azam Dedamari, the son of Khair-ul-zamān Khan (as in PNKB, p. 37).
6. See *infra.*
7. *Majmū'a al-Tawārīkh* completed in A. D. 1835-36.
8. *Tārīkhi-Hasan* (A. D. 1835).

year 700 A. H./A. D. 1300-01. It is said that this chaste lady was born in a Brahmin family in the village of Sempor. During the early days of her life she was under the influence of an extraordinary spell of ecstasy. . . she was married at Pampor. . ."

Hāji Mahī-ul-Dīn Miskīn's chronicle[1] corroborates *Tārīkhi Hasan* :

"Bibi Lalla 'Ārifa was one of the perfect saints and a second Rābi'a of Basra. She was born in 700 A. H. (*tavallud shud*) in the village of Sempor in a Brahmin family."

Pandit Anand Kaul and P. N. K. Bamzai, however, differ with the other chroniclers both on the time as well as the place of Lal Ded's birth :

"She was born about the middle of the fourteenth century of Christian era in the time of Sultan 'Alau-ud-Dīn, the third Muhammadan King of Kashmir. . . Her parents lived at Pāndrenṭhan (the ancient Purānadhishṭhāna, the old capital) four miles to the south-east of Srinagar."[2]

Other, and more recent writers[3], follow one or the other of the chroniclers; and neither they nor any of the chroniclers themselves mention the authority or the source material for what they believe to be the date or the place of her birth or, indeed, the events of life they narrate or the legends current about her which they incorporate in their books. We have thus three dates and two places of her birth, viz., *dates*, 700 A. H./A. D. 1300-01, 735 A. H./A. D. 1334-35, and 747 A. H./ A. D. 1346-47; *places of birth*, Sempor (near Pampor) and Pāndrenṭhan.

1. *Tārīkhi-Kabīr* (1909-10).
2. AK, p. 12.
3. Muhammad-ud-Dīn Fauq, Abdul Ahad Āzād, P. N. K. Bāmzai, Prem Nāth Bazāz, G. M. D. Sūfī, A. K. Rahbar, Dr. Mohibbul Hasan, Dr. R. K. Parmū and some others. See Bibliography.

We need not dwell upon the question of the place of birth. It should be a matter of indifference, but the date of birth is important, and the importance of it will be clear as we proceed. It appears well-nigh impossible now to settle finally the controversy about the date of her birth, but it should be worthwhile to determine certain probabilities about it. We may, first of all, reject the date 747 A. H., "about the middle of the century".[1] It is sometime about this date that almost all chroniclers narrate the incident of Prince Shihāb-ud-Dīn and the Yoginī, whether they call the Yoginī Lalla or leave the name unmentioned.[2] It is also about this date that Lal Ded is said to have become known through the incident of the pitcher of water[3], and to have left her home and hearth never to return. Very likely the mistake has been made owing to the double meaning of Persian phrase, *Zahūrash namūd*, used, for instance by the chronicler Dedamari, which means 'came to light, that is, was born, as well as 'flourished, became known'. In Dedamari's chronicle the context is clear : it means the date of 'coming to light', that is, 'becoming known'. And, if this is the date of her renunciation and the miracle of the water pitcher associated with her by almost every chronicler, then evidently she could not have been born in 735 A. H./A. D. 1334-35, for the sufficient reason that she would be only 12 years old by about the time of her renunciation. Moreover, while we have no positive evidence regarding the proper age of marriage of women in those times, it is reasonable to believe that pre-puberty marriages were not in vogue.[4] Lalla would, in that case, not be married before 15 to 18. Besides, she may be reasonably expected to have lived twelve years at least, as the legend goes, in her husband's home before she, a Brahmin girl, by tradition and training long suffering, would

1. AK, p. 12 and PNKB, p. 495.
2. See *infra*.
3. See *infra*.
4. SCR, p. 114 and PNKB, p. 187.

come to the tether of her patience with her mother-in-law's insufferable treatment of her, and leave her home for good or, alternatively, before, in response to the intensity of her spiritual *sādhana* the call came to her to renounce the world. For these reasons, Lal Ded's date of birth may be presumed to be sometime between 1317 and 1320, may be earlier but very likely not later than 1320. It may be earlier, as early as A. D. 1300-01, if chroniclers Hasan and Miskīn are to be believed, and there seems to be no reason why the others, like Shāyiq for instance, should be believed in preference to them. The corresponding date of her death, then, would be about A. D. 1372, that is, "during Sultan Shihāb-ud-Din's reign" as Dedamari has told us, if the date of birth be taken as 1301; or it would be sometime between A. D. 1388 and 1391 if the date of her birth be taken as sometime between 1317 and 1320 respectively, calculating 71 years as a fairly advanced age for the times.

Like the lives of saints everywhere else, the life of Lal Ded is shrouded in myth, miracle and legend, but in the words of Tor Andrae, "We need to become acquainted with the great personalities of the world religions in those garments in which the pious faith of their followers have clothed them. . . Something of the magic of their personalities which we might not understand in any other way, speaks to us through the poetry of faith".[1] Myths and miracles that surround saints' lives not only enrich hagiology or indicate the veneration in which the saints have been held but, often enough, they also illumine their teachings and become spiritually significant allegories.

Legends and miracles have been associated with Lal Ded from her very birth Pandit Anand Kaul (1868-1941), who was an assiduous researcher for new facts of antiquarian interest, has gathered for us some of these strange legends

1. Tor Andrae : *Mohammed : The Man and His Faith*, New York, Harper Torchbook Edition 1960, quoted by Lewis and Slater in *The Study of Religions* (Pelican, p. 63).

relating to her birth. In a previous birth of hers, Lal Ded was married to a man living at Pāndrenṭhan where she gave birth to a son. On the eleventh day of her confinement at the ceremony called *kāhnethu'r*, she said to the family priest, Siddha Shrikantha, "How's the new-born baby related to me?" "Why," said he, "he is your son." "No," she said, "I shall presently die and be reborn as a filly at the village of Marhom with such and such marks. Should you be curious to know the answer to my query, you may come to Marhom after a year." Shrikantha went to the village and found the filly with the characteristic marks; but, on enquiry, the filly told him that she was about to die and be reborn as a pup at Vejibror after six months and he could have the answer there. Thereupon, all on a sudden, a tiger rushed from a near-by bush and killed the filly. His curiosity very much awakened, Shrikantha pursued her not only at Vejibror, where he recognised the pup with the recognisable marks and where he was again asked to meet her in another birth somewhere else, but so on through six rebirths of her. Then, seventh time, she was reborn in the same family at Pāndrenṭhan in which she had died on the eleventh day of her confinement. When she was twelve years of age, she was married to a young man in a Brahmin family surnamed Nica Bhaṭṭ, living at Drangabal Mahal at Pāmpor, the ancient Padmapura founded in A. D. 812-849 by Padma, Minister of King Ajātapīḍa. It was while the marriage ceremony was on at her father's house that the bride Lalla whispered to Shrikantha : "The boy who was born to me in a previous birth you know of is the bridegroom here." Shrikantha remembered and was amazed.

It is not always easy to trace the origins of hagiographic legends or to understand their significance, if any. Lal Ded believed in transmigration and rebirth, and there are references in her *vaakh*[1] (verse-sayings) to the events of her own former

1. Sanskrit, *vākya*. In Kashmiri *vaakh* is used both as singular as well as plural.

lives, when through aeons of time she remembers having seen dissolution of the earth and all existing things (*pralaya*) and their rebirth.

"Seven times I saw the lake vanishing in the void." These curious legends emphasize her Hindu belief in rebirth as well as her yogic powers of recollecting the events and occurrences of former lives. They also emphasize the perpetual round of birth and death, *samsāra*, and, in a parable, illustrate the unity of being, the fundamental oneness of all existence, notwithstanding its various forms and appearances. In one of her *vaakh*, she says :

> As mother, a woman suckles a baby;
> As wife she dallies in conjugal love;
> As *Māyā* she takes one's life in the end;
> And yet in all these forms a woman she.

Such legends grow round the lives of saints as time passes in accordance with the beliefs prevalent at the time among the devotees; and therefore they do have an anthropological interest as well, and throw light on the social and communal beliefs of days gone by.

All legends are agreed on Lal Ded's having been born in a Brahmin family where, from a child, she not only imbibed the atmosphere of piety and religion but also where she came under the influence of Siddha Shrikantha or Siddha Mol (venerable Siddha), and learnt certain spiritual *sādhana*-s (disciplines). There is evidence of the fact that in those times, "liberal education was imparted" to women.[1] From a study of her *vaakh* too one is persuaded to believe that she was educated during the early part of her life at her father's house. There is unanimous agreement also that she was married into a Brahmin family of Pāmpor where she was cruelly treated by her mother-in-law. Perhaps to find a plausible reason for

1. SCR, p. 114.

a proverbially harsh treatment meted out to Lal Ded at her husband's house, it is sometimes said that her mother-in-law was the step-mother of her husband. According to a custom among the Brahmins of Kashmir, the bride is usually given a new name on her marriage; and therefore Lalla was henceforth known as Padmāvatī in her husband's home though, as is usual, her maiden name was not altogether given up and forgotten; but was, as is usual also, used by friends and acquaintances of pre-marriage days. With the proverbial asperity and scorn of a mother-in-law, the young Padmāvatī was reproached, even scolded, on the slightest pretext. She could not, she was told, spin yarn on the spinning wheel, though (the legend has it) she spun yarn as fine as the lotus-stalk. She couldn't do a thing properly, this darling daughter of her parents. What indeed had she learnt at her father's house ? Padmāvatī bore all taunts and insults uncomplainingly and never spoke a word of protest or complaint. We have, among the sayings current today, several which owe their origin to the events of her life. For instance : *ho'nḍ ma'rytan kina kaṭh Lalli nalavaṭh*[1] *tsali na zānh* (They may kill a big sheep or a tender lamb, Lalla will have her lump of stone all right) And thereby hangs a tale, a story exemplifying her heroic fortitude.

Her mother-in-law had invented ingenious means of cruel treatment. She would, for instance, serve food to her, spreading a thin layer of cooked rice so as to cover a lump of stone which was placed in her plate. Padmāvatī would collect and eat the little rice, get up quietly, wash the stone and put it again in the kitchen. This had become a daily routine till, one day, when she, as usual, went with her earthen pitcher to fetch water from the river ghat. That morning her neighbours teased her playfully about the feast of *grahashānti* (a ceremony invoking peace and blessings on the household). "What nice dishes Lalla will have today ! Surely she will not forget to

1. Not *nilavaṭh*, as some say. *Nilavaṭh* is a large dark stone, generally globular, which is said to be marble (Grierson's Dictionary).

invite her friends," said they, provoking Lalla in reply to utter the words which have become a proverb. Quite by an accident, her father-in-law overheard the remark and, when food was served that day to her, verified the truth of it for himself.

Not only this. Her mother-in-law had other, more sinister, strategems up her sleeve. Why did young Padmāvatī put on a solemn face? Why did she not mix with and join the fun and frolic and gossip of other young daughters-in-law of the neighbourhood ? Why did she always remain aloof ? And, worse still, she left for the ghat before dawn, but where did she idle away time till her return to home with the pitcher of water on her head ?—thus slyly accusing her of infidelity to her husband who, perhaps, had reason to feel dissatisfied with her frigidity towards him and mistook it for conjugal infidelity. Incidentally, it may be mentioned that there is current a saying ascribed to her, viz., "*na zāyas ta na pyāyas, na khe'yam hand na shonṭh*"[1] (I did not give birth to a child, nor lay in confinement). However that be, the truth was soon found out; and what was suspected to be a secret assignation turned out to be her daily tryst with God on whom she used to meditate at a quiet spot away from her home when she, unusually early morning, went on her daily chore of fetching water from the near-by river. The legend has it that she used to cross the river (of course without her feet dipping into the water) to the shrine of Naṭa Keshava Bhairava at the ghat of Zinypor village. Here she held her daily communion with God. Once, when after her meditation as usual, she quietly entered the compound of her house with the pitcher of water on her head, her husband, in his rage at her conduct which for him had apparently corroborated the sly insinuations of his (step-) mother, struck the pitcher of water on her head with a stick. The earthen pitcher broke into pieces but lo ! the water in it stood frozen on her head till she filled all pots in the kitchen

1. A fantastic mystical meaning has been discovered even in this simple statement, *vide*, KS, p. 45.

and then threw what remained of it outside which, surprisingly collected into a pond, and came to be known as "Lalla Trāg", the Pond of Lalla. The Pond, says the Persian chronicler, Pīr Ghulām Hasan, continued to be filled with water till 1300 A. H./A. D. 1925-26 and then went dry. Pandit Anand Kaul, who wrote his *Lalla Yogīshwarī* in the early thirties of this century, says, "This pond exists even now and is called Lal Trāg". Perhaps what he meant was that the pond, though dry, was till his time known as the Pond of Lalla. And it is still known as such even today.

This incident seems to have betrayed her. Her miraculous powers became known, her fame spread, and crowds of visitors came for her *darshan*. It was time she left her home. This she now did, in utter disregard of her personal appearance. On the basis of her *vaakh* :

> My Guru gave me but one precept;
> "From without withdraw your gaze within,
> And fix it on the inmost Self."
> I, Lalla, took to heart this one precept,
> And therefore naked[1] I began to dance—

a legend has grown and become persistent that she wandered naked, "dancing and singing in ecstatic frenzy as did the Hebrew *nabi*'s of old and the more modern Dervishes".[2] That she wandered about in a semi-nude state may well be true, but that she danced like whirling Dervishes is an interpretation that the Kashmiri word, *natsun*[3], does not bear. The word does mean 'dancing' in certain contexts but, more frequently, it is used to denote 'roaming about aimlessly where one

1. KS, p. 5. Verse 14, gives for the original word *nangay* (naked) a variant, *no'nguy*, a mountain-flower : "I danced like the flower *no'ng*." There is no such mountain-flower in Kashmir however; and this interpretation is totally wrong.
2. LV, p. 3.
3. The same as Hindi *nācnā*.

listeth'; and, in the context of this *vaakh*, it more properly bears the latter meaning. She would not now care how her exterior looked for the important thing for her was her interior. So she would not mind going about in a nude state wherever her whim would take her. But what is there in it to dance about ? That she must look within ? This is not convincing. There did, however, come a time when she had reason to dance and "disport herself with Him in ecstasy": *me' tse' ta pānas dyutum tshoh.* But that was not yet. Just yet her Guru's word, that she should lose the world to gain her soul, was a painful "loss-blister" (*rāvan tvo'l*) to her. In this context it would be doing violence to language to make it mean what Grierson[1] understands by it.

Moreover, this very verse has been the reason for some to say that henceforth she, Padmāvatī of Pāmpor, came to be known as Lal Ded (Granny Lal), for the flabbiness of the lower part of her belly (*lal* in Kashmiri) increased in size and hung loose over her pubic region. It is difficult to agree with this view regarding her name, or with the conjecture made by some recent authors that *Lalla* is a corruption of *Lila* or *lol*,[2] which is unwarranted by linguistics. "Lalla", it appears, was a name in use in the ancient times[3]; and it, very probably, was Lal Ded's maiden name. She uses it when speaking of herself as, for instance, when she said to her friends, "*Lali nalavaṭh tsali na zānh*",[4] where she refers to herself as "Lali" (to Lal). At that time she was, we may note, a housewife, not "a wandering ascetic". Besides, whenever she refers to herself in her *vaakh*, she uses the same name *Lal* (or, *Lali*, *La'ly*, the other grammatical forms of it in Kashmiri); and the name occurs at least 21 times[5] in 184 *vaakh*, 109 given by Grierson

1. LV, 44; contrast it with 77 and 94.
2. AKR, p. 150 fn.
3. Raj., VI. 74.
4. *supra.*
5. LV, Nos. 3, 48, 49, 68, 76, 82, 83, 93, 94, 102, 103, 105 and AK, Nos. 13, 15, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 63, 73.

and 75 by Anand Kaul. Parenthetically, it may be pointed out that the name would in Kashmiri be pronounced as "Lal" or "Lalla", almost indifferently.

There are other anecdotes, other legends; and there is little doubt that as time passed (and it has happened everywhere) legends grew in number and the same legends were told and retold in various forms. It is said that once when her Guru, Siddha Shrikantha, was having his early morning bath in the river, he noticed that, a little above where he was bathing, Lalla was scrubbing the outside of an earthen pot filled with dirt. He remonstrated with her. "What use this scrubbing the pot while the dirt inside it is not removed ?" Lalla was quick to retort : "What profits it to bathe to cleanse the body while the inner self is not purified ?"

Shrikantha had undertaken *candrāvana*, a 40-day austere penance of fasting and self-mortification. One morning Lalla came to his house and inquired where he was. On being told that he was absorbed in his meditation (*su chu karān zaph*), Lalla observed with gentle irony, "Yes, watching his horse being kicked at the meadow of Nandamarg (*ava Nandamargi chis divān guris ṭaph*)". There is a slight variant of her remark, viz., "yes, feeding salt to his horse at Nandimarg (*ava Nandamargi divān guris nūn*)". Shrikantha overheard her remarks and felt humiliated, because his mind had indeed strayed into watching his horse being kicked by some other horse at the meadow where it had been sent for summer months. Then, it is said, she gave him a demonstration of what the penance should really be. She placed an earthen pot on her head and another under her feet; and with the waning of the moon, her body waned till, on the fifteenth night of the dark fortnight (*amāvas*), nothing was left of her except a little quantity of trembling quicksilver. Then, with the waxing moon her body waxed and, on the full-moon night, she was herself again. In wonderment her Guru asked : "What was the quicksilver-like substance in the pot trembling all the time ?" "It was I,"

replied Lalla, "shorn of all the appurtenances of body, its senses and desires, mind and ego; and yet I trembled for fear that I might not be accepted, for there is no *mukti* (liberation) through mere self-mortification. It comes ultimately as God's grace". The Guru admitted that the disciple had far outstripped the preceptor (*gav tsāṭh gwaras kha'sith*). The Muslim chronicler, Pir Ghulam Hasan, and, following him, some others mention a variant of this anecdote. Lal Ded is said to have demonstrated this penance of hers to a Muslim as the true mystical practice of *nafi-o-isbāt*, that is, negation (*la illāh*) and affirmation (*Il-lal-lāh*) as against the usual practice of recitation of the holy word accompanied by certain gesticulations.

Again, once an open-air performance was held at Pāmpor and it attracted a large crowd. Lal Ded's father-in-law too was there and he saw her standing nude among the spectators. He reprimanded her, and led her into his house to put on some clothes and cover her shame. She protested, saying that there were no human beings about, only goats and sheep; and asked him to look out from the window. He saw and was dumbfounded. There were only sheep and goats there. For, hath it not been said that whoever is engrossed only in material pursuits is but an animal or indeed a block of wood or a lump of stone[1] ?

Lal Ded had outstripped the need for the performance of prescribed rituals and ceremonies as also the worship of icons and images. Indeed, she upbraided those who felt satisfied with these externalities of religion like the worship of idols, animal sacrifice, pilgrimages to shrines and sacred places, mere recitations of scriptures, and observance of fasts and prescribed rites. There is nothing impious or even unusual about this in a Saiva Yogini, for the Trika preceptors and the *āgama*-s themselves have said so. The yogi performs his daily prayers

1. *Pāshānāyita-vṛttayah punaramī ye shāstra-vandhyā narāh* (*Mālinīvijaya-vārttika,* Abhinavagupta).

(*sandhyā*) without incantation (*mantra*) and water; his meditation, without sacrificial fire (*homa*) and telling of beads (*japa*); his daily sacrificial *yajnā*, without flowers and other accessories of worship (*pūja*). Telling of beads or recitation of the names of God and singing of hymns of praise are worship of a low kind while offering of oblations into sacrificial fire (*homa*) and *pūja* are even lower than the low kind of worship (*japastutih syādadhamā homapūjādhamādhamā*). To men of little intelligence God seems to dwell in icons or symbolic diagrams (*pratimāsu alpabuddhīnām*). And, in the same vein is belittled the worth and value of fasting, penance, pilgrimage, worship of the gods and the like of *vrata, tapa, tīrtha, devācārnādishu.* God (it is emphasized) should be meditated upon as one without hands, feet, belly or limbs, and only as Satcidānanda and Prakāsha."[1]

This denigration of the ceremonial pieties of religion by Lal Ded is seen in her own *vaakh* :

O fool, right action does not lie
In fasting and other ceremonial rites.

Or

The idol is but stone,
The temple is but stone,
From top to bottom all is stone.

Or

The pilgrim sannyasi goes from shrine to shrine,
Expecting to meet Him who abides within his own self.

To illustrate her precept by the example of her life, legends were naturally associated with her. One day she came to the

1. *Kulārnava Tantra* : Ullasa IX, shlokas 34, 39, 45, 33 and 5 respectively.

temple where Siddha Shrikantha, her guru, was engaged in *pūja*. He saw her and asked what she had come there for. She replied that she had come to the temple for privacy, to ease herself. He led her out at once to a spot some distance away, but Lalla scratched it and unearthed idols there as well as at some other spots near by to the utter amazement of her guru. There is a crude variant of this anecdote. It is said that this happened at the home of her guru, in his *pūja* room, and that she actually defacated on the sacred idols.[1] This conduct is incompatible with that of a saint and, evidently, it has been a much later variant introduced to express the narrator's own disgust of idol-worship. As the chronicler Pir Ghulam Hasan himself puts it, her aim was to show that God is everywhere. "Show me," she asked, "a place which is not the house of God *(khāna-e khudā)*. Evidently, the first version of the anecdote illustrates this better than the second.

While she was popularly and affectionately called Lal Ded or Lalla Moj (Mother Lalla), she would sometimes be teased and mocked at and even called names (Lalla *Ma'ts*, the mad Lalla) by street urchins. Once, so goes the legend, a shopkeeper, a cloth dealer, reprimanded a group of such street urchins and drove them away. Thereupon, Lal Ded asked him to give her a piece of long cloth which he did. She cut it into two equal lengths and placed each length on either of her shoulders and went her way tying knots on one of them when people bowed to her, and on the other when they showed disrespect to her. In the evening she came back to the cloth dealer and asked him to weigh the two lengths of cloth. They weighed the same, irrespective of the number of knots in either of them. Lal Ded smiled and said :

> I shall not feel distressed nor hurt
> At a thousand abuses they hurl at me.

1. *Tārīkh-i Hasan*, Vol. 3 and *Bībī Lalla 'Ārifa* (RPL, acc. no. 255).

There is a saying current even today in Kashmiri : *Yina mandachokh na cana chukh mandachān*, you were not ashamed to be here (born) and yet you are ashamed to suck (your mother's breast). It is said that when Nund Rishi (later named Sheikh Nūrud-dīn Walī), the pre-eminent saint of the Muslim Rishi Order of Kashmir, was born, he would not suck his mother's breast till Lal Ded chanced to come that way and patted the baby and with these words asked him to draw milk from the breast of his mother, which he did. It also runs current that Lal Ded and he used to meet and have spiritual discourses together, as, for instance, the following :

1. *Lal Ded* : There is no light like the light of the sun,
No pilgrimage-place like the Ganga,
No relative like one's brother,
No comfort like one's wife.

2. *Nund Rishi* : There is no light like the light of one's eyes,
No pilgrimage "like one's own knees"[1],
No relative like one's own pocket,
No comfort like a warm heavy blanket.

3. *Lal Ded* : There is no light like the knowledge of God,
No pilgrimage like the love of God,
No relative like God Himself,
No comfort like the fear of God.

There are, however, different versions of the occasion that provoked this verse dialogue. It is said that Lal Ded's husband once went to the Reverend Siddha and requested him to persuade Lal Ded to return home. He agreed and, accompanied by the husband of Lal Ded, met her; and it was the husband who started the dialogue, the Siddha saying the second and Lal Ded the third stanza. Some say that Bābā Nasr-ud-din, the chief disciple of Nund Rishi, also used to

1. *Kwaṭhyan hyuh :* A Kashmiri idiom meaning the capacity to walk, to go about from place to place.

take part in these conversations, and that it was he who began it, Nund Rishi and Lal Ded saying the second and the third stanzas respectively. Evidently, the more fitting occasion for it would be for the husband to start the dialogue to emphasize that there is no comfort like one's spouse.

Pandit Anand Kaul relates that sometimes Mīr Sayyid Alī Hamadānī, Lal Ded and Nund Rishi would meet to converse on spiritual subjects. He gives instances of their playing at the game of blind man's buff; at making predictions of what a gathering cloud would bring; and even at showing off their occult powers—all these to the advantage of Lal Ded.[1] There are others, chiefly followers of the Kubrawi Order of Shāh Hamadān, who claim that it was he with whom Lalla 'Ārifa journeyed through 'the four spheres' of mystic meditation to the Empyrean, *arsh-i majīd*, itself.[2] These anecdotes, however, appear to be incredible. Shāh Hamadān came to Kashmir for the first time in 1372-3 when, according to Anand Kaul and many others[3], Nund Rishi was not born. When he came a second time in 1379 and stayed for a little over two and a half years, or again, a third and last time in 1383 for a short stay, Nund Rishi (according to them all, born in 779 A. H./A. D. 1377) would be a mere toddler, not a grown-up boy as the late Abdul Ahad Azad suggests.[4]

These facts notwithstanding, there is the persistent legend about the meeting of Lal Ded and Shāh Hamadān enshrined indelibly in the current Kashmiri saying, which has become

1. AK, pp. 31-32.
2. The four *'ālam*-s of *Nāsūt, Malkūt, Jabrūt* and *Lāhūt*, the spheres, respectively, of Humanity, Angels, Omnipotence, and Divinity. BBL, RPL, 255.
3. Anand Kaul, *A Life of Nund Rishi* (1930) reprinted from the *Indian Antiquary*, Vols. LVIII, LIX. These others are : Miskīn, Dedamarī, and Hājinī. While some others, Mishkātī and Hasan (Vol. II) give 757 A. H. and 758 A. H. respectively as the date. The latter two, however, do not mention these anecdotes.
4. AAA, II, 156.

proverbial, viz., *āyeyi wā'nis gayi kāndras*, that she (Lal Ded) had gone to the grocer but (instead) arrived at the baker's. It is said that Lal Ded was at the village of Khāmpor, ten miles south of Srinagar on the, then, main road to Shopian when she saw Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani approaching from the other side. All on a sudden she ran to the near by shop of a grocer to hide herself, saying "Here's *a man* going !" But the grocer turned her away and she rushed into the baker's; and before he knew what was about, she jumped into the hot oven. Bewildered, poor baker put the lid on the oven and fell down unconscious; but Lal Ded came out "attired in clothes of gold" to meet the Sayyid unabashed. Here, again we have a different version. It says that when Mir Sayyid Ali came to the baker's shop, he asked the baker to remove the lid and called out to Lal Ded whereupon she came out dressed in "green-coloured garments of paradise"; and then the two together journeyed through the four (mystic) spheres to the Emyrean.[1] Others say that Lal Ded performed this miraculous deed to tell Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani that the ordeal prescribed by the much-dreaded King Timūr of Central Asia —that the Sayyids must prove their purity and spiritual attainment by riding a red-hot iron horse or die — was, after all, not such a fateful ordeal the fear of which should have sent hundreds of Sayyids fleeing from the countries over which Timūr ruled.[2] It may be noted here that Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani, popularly known in Kashmir as Shāh Hamadān, entered Kashmir first time in 1372 with 700 Sayyid followers, refugees from Timūr's persecution.

There is, however, no evidence to corroborate this anecdote of the oven or even the mere fact of Lal Ded's having met Shāh Hamadān. The earlier Persian Chronicles[3], while they

1. See *Supra*.
2. AK, pp. 28-29.
3. *Bahāristān-i-Shāhi* (1614), *Tārīkhi Kashmīr* (Malik Tsodura, 1617-18), *Asrārul Abrār* (Dawūd Mishkāti, 1654), *Muntakhibul Tawārīkh* (Nara-

mention some other incident or incidents, do not make a mention of this meeting at all. Khwāja Muhammad 'Azam Dedamarī in his *Wāqi'āti Kashmir* is explicit on the point. He writes that, after much inquiry and research, "the story of her being present before His Holiness Sayyid Ali Hamadani, the Second Ali, a pillar of Divinity, during his sojourn when he held aloft the banner of direction, has not been held as proved by research scholars (*nazd-i arbāb-i tahqīq sābit na shud*)". The earliest and the only mention of it is made as late as the 19th century by Birbal Kachru in his *Majmu 'al Tawārīkh* (1836). It is significant that the next chronicler, Pir Ghulam Hasan, who writes in greater detail and devotes the third volume of his *Tārīkhi Hasan* to Pirs and saints of Kashmir and even refers to Lal Ded having met Sayyid Jalāl-ud-Dīn Bukhārī and Sayyid Hussain Samnānī, does not make a mention of a meeting between Lal Ded and Sayyid Ali Hamadani (Shāh Hamadān). What later chroniclers and writers have said in this regard need not be taken a serious notice of because they have, without investigation, recorded what was given in any one or more of the chronicles they happened to consult.

This legend owes its origin very probably to an incident recorded in *Asrār-ul Abrār* ; and this very record proves that Lal Ded did not meet Shāh Hamadān as reported by the later chroniclers. *Asrār-ul Abrār* records the incident as follows :

"She was sitting nude at a wayside. People passed that way but she continued sitting nude and did not heed them at all till one of them came near her. When he came near, she at once veiled herself with herself and covered her limbs by pressing her knees against her abdomen. When he saw this, he accosted her : 'O, you that are mad in love for God, what's this ? You sat nude while a large crowd passed by, unmindful of them and unabashed as if none of them were a living human being. But now I came and you hastened to draw in

yan Kaul, 1710), *Wāqi'āti Kashmīr* (Mohd 'Azam, 1746), *Gauhar-i-'Ālam* (Mohd Aslam, 1786).

your limbs.' She said to him, 'For all those who passed by me why should I, a mad one with matted hair, unkempt and dust-laden, care for them ? Now you came, *a man*, and saw me nude. I felt it obligatory for me to hasten to cover my limbs out of modesty.'[1] This anecdote refers to "one of the crowd" (*yake azīn tāifa*), no name being mentioned. Surely, this would not be the language to refer to Shāh Hamadān. It is, very probably, this incident that has been embellished into the anecdote of the oven.

There is an anecdote relating to a prophecy which needs a definitive scrutiny. Most of the Persian chronicles have mentioned it. We are told that Shihāb-ud-dīn, the elder son and heir-apparent of Sultan Alau-ud-din, had gone ahunting with his companions, Malik Jindār, Ādarsh Rāwal, and Akhtājī. They felt very thirsty but, quite unexpectedly, there issued forth from a mountain defile Lalla 'Ārifa bearing a cup of sherbet in her hand which she offered to the prince. He accepted it and after he drank of it, offered it to Ādarsh Rāwal who, in turn, handed it over to Malik Jindār. The Malik, however, did not leave any of it for the third companion. Thereupon Lalla 'Ārifa prophesied that the Prince would become a renowned king, Adarsh would be his Prime Minister, Malik his commander-in-chief but the third companion would die before they reached home. The prophesy came to pass. This, surprisingly, is the only anecdote that finds corroboration in Jonarāja's *Dvitiya Rājatarangiṇī*, but with a difference. Jonarāja says that, on this occasion, "the leader of the Yoginīs recognized the prince from afar; and with a blessing offered (to him) a cup of wine (*shīdhucashakam*) consecrated with a *mantra*."[2] Jonarāja does not mention the name "Lalla", nor do the unknown author of *Bahāristān-i-Shāhi* (A. D. 1614); Malik Haider, the author of *Tārīkhi Kashmīr* (A. D. 1617-18); and Rafi'a-ul-Dīn Ghāfil, the author of *Navādiri Akhbār* (A. D.

1. Folio 320-22 (RPL).
2. DRAJ, 348.

1723), do so. The name finds a mention, for the first time, in Mishkāti's *Asrārul Abrār* (1654), and then it is taken up by most other chroniclers that followed him. The Sanskrit word *Shīdhu* (wine) became *sherbet*, even *shīr* (milk)[1], in Persian transcription, a variant that suited the susceptibilities of Muslim hagiographers and chroniclers. It was, besides, easy to attribute the prophecy to Lal Ded, the only Yoginī known to be alive at the time to these later writers. They would not know anything about the Shākta Yoginīs and their occult powers nor the fact that wine was an accessory of their *pūja*. Lal Ded, it must be said, did not approve of cultivating occult powers nor performing miracles which she called "jugglery" (*kapaṭ tsaryath*).

There are other anecdotes about Lal Ded's miraculous powers, but they are all of a much later date, the last quarter of the 19th and the first of the 20th ; and we shall pass them over. The most significant thing about them is not the slant given to these as to some other anecdotes pointed out above but the statement that she had her spiritual illumination from Sayyid Hussain Samnānī at whose hands she became a convert to Islam. Let the Lahore pamphlet, *Bibī Lalla 'Arifa*[2] speak :

"Perhaps in 748 A. H. (1347 A. D.) Sayyid Jalāl-ud-dīn Bukhāri visited Kashmir. At this time Lalla 'Ārifa was in need of a perfect preceptor, a man of God, a Khizar-like guide, to direct her to the True Beloved. In her *vaakh* she expressed her sorrow. When she heard of his coming, she put on clothes and forthwith walked barefoot as fast as she could to receive him. She met him at Hirapur. Lalla 'Ārifa *herself speaks of this in her own vaakh* (italics mine) as follows :

'His blessed feet had a *n'alain* (slippers) on. I bowed to it seven times and put the dust of it into my eyes as collyrium. He graciously raised my head and sat me next to him. Then I walked back with him; and with his own hands he cooked

1. Malik Haider.
2. RPL, 255.

food and gave me of it too. Then he said to me, 'Lalla 'Ārifa, we shall now proceed towards Tujar where on soandso date Makhdūm Shaikh Hamza will be born, who will be known as the World's beloved (*Mahbūb-ul 'Ālam*)'." The narrative goes on : "Returning from Tujar, he instructed her in meditation (*talqīni murāqaba*) on Koh-i-Mārān[1] and said to her, 'Your restlessness and anxiety will soon come to an end. Your guide and preceptor (*rāhnuma, murshid*), Hazrat Sayyid Hussain Samnānī will shortly arrive in Kashmir. It is he who will guide you to your spiritual destination through his miraculous spiritual powers.' " Sayyid Hussain Samnānī came to Kashmir in 773 A. H./A. D. 1371-72 during the reign of Sultan Shihāb-ud-dīn. When Lalla 'Ārifa heard of his coming, she went several stages ahead to receive him. She felt elated and received the beneficence of secret doctrine, and in the end she became inwardly and outwardly his chief disciple (*murīdi khās*). She was a born saint (*walī*); but her spiritual powers received polish and refinement from her contact with the great sūfīs. This should be obvious to all. . . Musalmans say that she accepted Islam at the hands of Sayyid Hussain Samnānī".

What has been obvious to all, throughout the centuries, is that Lal Ded was a born saint; that even from a child, born and bred up in a religious atmosphere of *pūja* and *sādhana*, she had at an early age shown signs of extraordinary spiritual sensibility; that the circumstances at her husband's house had only reinforced this inborn sensibility and made her not only tap her inner resources of patience and quiet sufferance but also seek and find within herself spiritual certitude and illumination which she had learnt was the basic truth of existence and the ultimate ground of being. And, obviously, she renounced the world in response to the inner call which brooks no delay or disobedience, the call that comes to one who is prepared for it, a fit and proper vehicle (*pātra*). This is, how-

1. The orthodox Muslims and Ulamā call the hillock of Hari Parbat, sacred to the Hindus, by this Persian name.

ever, not to deny that she may have met Muslim missionaries and sūfīs and, in the words of the late Abdul Ahad Āzād, "conversed with them to their mutual interest and benefit". But the record must be put right; and it must be emphasized that this anecdote, which is said by the narrator himself to be based upon "Lalla 'Ārifa's own *vaakh* (verse-sayings)", *is not so corroborated at all.* Not a single verse-saying of hers has been discovered up to date even among the doubtful and spurious verse-sayings ascribed to her, which would bear out either this anecdote or similar other anecdotes concerning her. This should be enough to clinch the argument. What, on the contrary, may reasonably be suggested is that since Lal Ded could not be dislodged from the affection and reverence of the unsophisticated people of our countryside, who looked upon her as a God-realised soul, the only device in the interests of orthodoxy would evidently be, by implication, to convey that she, though a born saint, could yet scale the heights of spiritual perfection only after accepting Islam. Moreover, no chronicler has referred to this incident till as late as 1885, when Pir Ghulam Hasan recorded it in his *Tārīkh-i Hasan* ; and we may conclude the argument in his very words : "The Hindus say that she is one of them. The Musalmans claim that she belongs to them. The truth is that she is among the chosen of God (*fil haqīqat vay az khāsān-i khudāst*). May God's peace be on her !"

And so Lal Ded lived on as a wandering ascetic absorbed in God consciousness seeking and seeing God everywhere (*Shiv tshorun thali thale*[1]). She seems to have been unmindful of Hindu caste taboos regarding food and drink (*anas khyanas kyāh chum dvesh*); she disregarded the ceremonial pieties and outward observances of religion; and laid stress on the inner quest and sincere pursuit of spiritual perfection. She abhorred meat, unlike the Brahmins of Kashmir; and, unlike both Hindus and Musalmans, spoke vehemently against the killing

1. AAA, Vol. II, p. 113.

of innocent sheep even as a sacrifice to the Deity. There could be no exclusiveness and discrimination between man and man, or Hindu and Musalman —

mav zān Hyo'nd ta Musalmān.

At a time of stress and revolutionary change, she stood for eternal values of the spirit, of human goodness and purity, loving-kindness and service of all. Then came the end, it is said, behind the wall of Juma Masjid at Vejibror, 28 miles South-east from Srinagar, on the highway to Jammu. "A flame of sharp light shot forth from her body and vanished from sight."[1] Muhammad Din Fauq[2] relates the legend which has come down from *Rishīnāma.* One day Lal Ded sat in a large earthen tub-like vessel (*tagāra*) and placed another such vessel on her head, concealing herself between the two. Those who saw her do this were puzzled and, when a short while after, the upper vessel was removed, they found nothing. And, says the legend, this was the manner of her passing away.

Lal Ded passed away, leaving not a trail behind; and it is a matter of surprise that there should not have been a *samadhi* (temple) or a *maqbara* (tomb) to mark the place where her body was cremated or laid to rest.[3]

maryam na kunh ta mara na kā'nsi
mara nech ta lasa nech

Alike for me is life and death;
Happy to live, happy to die,
I mourn for none, none mourns for me.

1. Pir Ghulam Hasan and Anand Kaul.
2. *Khawātīn-i-Kashmīr*, RPL, 1454.
3. "It is said (*dapān*) that she was born on Bhādra pūrnimā and died on Phālguna shukla ashṭami." (JLKJ, 1956.)

CHAPTER TWO

LALLA VAAKH[1] : THE TEXT

Yim pad Lalli va'ny tim hradi ā'nkh

On the tablet of your heart engrave
the words that Lalla spoke.

IN chapter one, I have discussed, somewhat in detail, the myths, miracles and legends associated with Lal Ded. I did so because I felt it was time we cried halt to the uncritical repetition of at least those of the myths and legends that neither interpret her life and action nor expound her message. It is evident that they cannot be regarded as history for the mere fact that they have been recorded in chronicles or the lives of saints. It is evident also that some of them have had their source in the credulity of the devout; some have been invented not as much to exemplify her belief or action as to express the inventor's abhorrence of certain practices (like the story of Lal Ded's defecation on the sacred idols of her guru[2]); and some others appear to be the stock-in-trade of hagiography (like the vanishing of her body at the time of death). We

1. *Vaakh*, Sans. *vākyam* (sing.), *Vākyani* (plural), meaning word, verse-saying. In Kashmiri *vaakh* is both singular and plural.
2. See *supra*.

have no authentic historical material on which to build her life story. Strangely enough, there is no monument built to commemorate her, neither a temple nor a tomb. There are no relics except (if we may call them so) the Pond of Lalla, now dry, and Siddhayaar, the ghat, now almost forgotten, at which her guru, Siddha Mol, the Reverend Siddha, used to bathe in the Vitasta (the Jhelum) and at which some pilgrims to Sri Amaranātha Swāmi still bathe during the famous yearly pilgrimage. Nor can we accept as historical all the events narrated in *Rishīnāma*-s or *Nūrnāma*-s, for they too were written long after Nund Rishi had passed away and, like other hagiographical record, are full of reverent but highly embellished descriptions and creations of imagination. They are a curious specimen of the compromises that had to be made while writing *nāma*-s (accounts) to respect the susceptibilities of both the followers of the powerful foreign missionaries and of the indigenous saints held in high respect.[1] Like most of the hagiographers, irrespective of their religion or country of birth, the Kashmiris too have not found it possible to be purely objective when writing about their saints and sufis. "It is," says Ibn Khaldun, "of the nature of tradition to incorporate false statements." Among the causes which produce them, he lists (a) attachment to certain opinions and schools of thought; (b) belief that one has the truth, which is widespread and comes generally from overconfidence in narrators of the past, and (c) ignorance of the circumstances surrounding an event induced by ambiguity or embelishment.[2] This explains it, here as well as elsewhere.

Lal Ded herself is, however, a fact : she is a real historical person. We cannot gainsay *Lalla vaakh*. They are there and, interpolations and changes in diction effected by time notwithstanding, they have been enshrined in the loving memory of generation after generation of Kashmiris and preserved ever

1. e. g., see AAA, Vol. 2, pp. 149-51.
2. Quoted by Alfred Guillaume in *Islam* (Pelican, pp. 20-21).

since they fell from her lips. Her great younger contemporary, the founder of the indigenous Order of Muslim Rishis of Kashmir, the famous saint Nund Rishi, speaks of her with sincere reverence; and from that time to this, other saints and poets, Muslim and Hindu alike, have expressed their affection and esteem in memorable words.

We have several collections of her verse sayings but there has been no attempt at collating them, except partly, by Grierson and Barnett; and there has hardly been any textual criticism worth the name. They were not contemporaneously collected and recorded in a manuscript; the manuscripts of a later date that have been available are not complete and "no two agree in contents or text"[1]; and there is no doubt that they have largely been handed down by oral tradition. But, as Sir George Grierson rightly observes, the want of a complete manuscript of Lal Ded's compositions need not make us doubt the authenticity of them. For, to quote his words, "the ancient Indian system by which literature is recorded not on paper but on the memory, and carried down from generation to generation of teachers and pupils, is still in complete survival in Kashmir. Such fleshly tables of the heart are often more trustworthy than birch-bark or paper manuscripts".[2] After all, the Vedic hymns were handed down by word of mouth for centuries. Moreover, Sir George had a proof of the almost infallibility of such oral tradition in the collection of folktales by Sir Aurel Stein in 1896. Sir Aurel had taken them down in writing from the mouth of a professional story-teller and when, fifteen years later, at Sir George's request, he got the story-teller to repeat certain passages, "they were repeated by him *verbatim, literatim, et punctuatim*".[3]

The collection of Lal Ded's verses was recorded for him under very similar circumstances in 1914 by the late Mahā-

1. LV, p. 3.
2. ibid., p. 3.
3. LV, p. 3.

mahopādhyāya Pandit Mukund Ram Shāstri. Unable to find a satisfactory manuscript, he chanced to contact a very old Brahmin named Dharmadas Darvesh, of the village of Gush in Handwara Tehsil, who, as an act of piety, used to recite Lal Ded's verses as he had learnt them by family tradition (*kula-paramparācārakrama*). Mukund Ram Shastri recorded the text from his dictation and sent it to Sir George Grierson for whom it formed the basis for his edition of *Lallā-Vākyāni.* Though it is not based on the collation of various manuscripts, Sir George consulted two manuscripts[1] written in Shāradha alphabet of Kashmir as well as the 60-verse collection translated into Sanskrit by Rājānaka Bhāskara nearly two hundred years before. It is this, the only, scholarly edition comprising 109 verses[2] that has formed the basis of all subsequent responsible collections; and there can be no hesitation in agreeing with Sir Richard Temple that "*on the whole*, it can be said fairly that he (Grierson) did succeed in getting the actual text of what Lalla left behind her" (italics mine).[3] To them have been added another 75 verses by Pandit Anand Kaul who, in the preface to his booklet *Lalla Yogishwari*[4] writes : "There remained unpublished a number of sayings of Lal Ded over and above those already conserved by the said gentlemen (Grierson and Barnett). I therefore made searching inquiries for them in different parts of the Kashmir Valley and my labours were fortunately rewarded by my being able to obtain 75 more sayings." There are a few more verses besides those contained in these two collections, making in all a total of 258 *vaakh*.[5]

Speaking of Grierson's scholarly edition of *Lallā-Vākyāni*, I said that, *on the whole*, he succeeded in giving us an authentic

1. LV, p. 5, MSS. Stein A and Stein B, housed in the Oxford Indian Institute.
2. Excluding verses of the appendix from KN.
3. RCT, p. 10.
4. AK, p. 9.
5. See 'A Note on the Text' at the end.

text of Lal Ded's verse-sayings. As I shall endeavour to make clear, we cannot vouch for the authenticity, beyond doubt, of each one of the verses included in the edition. It may not be proper to the purpose of the series of books of which this is intended to be one to undertake here textual criticism of these verses of doubtful authenticity; but it must be indicated, however briefly, why we should guard against uncritically including what a little thought tells us are either the work of others wrongly ascribed to Lal Ded or unwarranted variants and spurious interpolations. From our knowledge of them up to date, there are 35 verses that occur both in *Lalla vaakh*, collections of Lal Ded's verses, and in *Nūrnāma*-s and *Rishīnāma*-s, the biographies of Nund Rishi, which include his *shrukh*[1] (Sanskrit, *shloka*); three verses occur in *Lalla vaakh* as well as in *Rahasyopadesha*, the verse-sayings of Rūpa Bhawāni (A. D. 1620-1720); three quatrains that belong to one Azīzullāh Khān (early 19th century) have been ascribed to Lal Ded by Rev. J. Hinton Knowles in his *Dictionary of Kashmiri Proverbs*, two of which have been included by Grierson in his *Lallā-Vākyāni*. It is, however, not contended that since they occur in the verse collections of these other poets, they are, simply for that reason, the creation of these other poets. From a careful scrutiny, out of 35 verses that occur both in *Lalla vaakh* and *Nūrnāma* only 15 are very probably Lal Ded's. They are only later variants of Lal Ded's *vaakh* attributed to Nund Rishi. The mere fact that the first copy of *Nūrnāma* was made before Lal Ded's *vaakh* were recorded in a manuscript (itself merely a conjectural assumption) is evidently not an irrefutable proof of the fact that the verses that are attributed to both Lal Ded and Nund Rishi must originally have been the creation of Nund Rishi and not of Lal Ded.[2] On the contrary, the *vaakh* of Lal Ded having become current and a part of the common speech could, even for their earlier start, have been

1. The verse-sayings of Nund Rishi are commonly called by this name.
2. NN, pp. 16-18.

mixed up with the *shrukh* of Nund Rishi in the memory of the devout, particularly because Nund Rishi as well as his disciples held Lal Ded in great reverence and should have been familiar with them. Moreover, it may be noted that (a) Professor Buhler's *Detailed Report of a Tour in Search of Sanskrit* MSS mentions two collections[1] of Lal Ded's *vaakh*; and (b) that Grierson consulted two manuscripts of Lalla's *vaakh* belonging to the Stein Collection.[2] The dates when these manuscripts or the original manuscript or manuscripts of which they are copies were written are not yet known; and it is therefore impossible to presume that the *Nūrnāma* recorded by Bābā Nasīb-ud-dīn, two hundred years after Nund Rishi's death, and the earliest of its kind known to us, is necessarily a document earlier in time to these manuscripts of Lal Ded's *vaakh*.[3] On the contrary again, this would reinforce the argument put forward here, viz., that two hundred years of oral circulation would be a sufficiently long time for this mixing up having taken place between the verses of these two popular poet-saints. It must not, however, be presumed that there has been this mixing up in all the extant manuscripts of *Rishīnāma*-s and *Nūrnāma*-s in some of which we find interspersed specimen of Sheikh Nūr-ud-dīn's Kashmiri verse-sayings or *shrukh*. Indeed this is not so in what are considered to be the oldest manuscripts.[4] There is, besides, the evidence of other manuscripts like the *Rishīnāma* of Bābā Kamāl-ud-dīn said to have been recorded in 1251 A. H./A. D. 1835-36[5] It

1. LV, p. 3, footnote 2.
2. Stein A & Stein B, See *supra*.
3. Particularly Ms. Stein B; Ms. Stein A contains Bhaskara's Sanskrit translation and therefore is a later document.
4. See RPL, MSS. No. 53 of Bābā Nasīb-ud-din's *Rishīnāma* (incomplete, only upto p. 328); No. 504 (a copy of No. 53); No. 668 of Bābā Kamāl-ud-dīn's *Rishīnāma* (incomplete); No. 956.
5. MS. in the possession of Motilāl Sāqī of village Māhnoor, dated 1322 A. H./A. D. 1903, scribe Hājī Muhammad Kapru, son of Hājī Muhammad Yūsuf.

contains, in a separate chapter, specimen of Lal Ded's *vaakh* many of which have been attributed to Sheikh Nūr-ud-dīn (Nund Rishī) in some other *Rishīnāma* as recorded by Amin Kāmil.[1] It appears likely that this mix up, whether deliberate or not, has been a late development.

Nor can any reliable inference regarding the authenticity of authorship of these verses be deduced from their being rhymed, unrhymed or "written in blank verse". It is argued that since 'blank verse' is a recent, a post-1947, literary phenomenon in Kashmiri, therefore the 'blank verse vaakh' attributed to Lal Ded are either spurious or a corrupted form of the original.[2] This argument may be summarily dismissed. Firstly, Persian and therefore rhyme as an indispensible adjunct of verse, had not yet become a subject for study in *maktabs* which indeed had not till then come into existence. Secondly, whatever education Lal Ded might have had would be in Sanskrit and she would, in any case, be acquainted with Sanskrit and Old Kashmiri, then prevalent. And, thirdly, Sanskrit and Old Kashmiri verse need not have, and usually do not have any rhyme at all though Shiti Kantha's *Mahānayaprakāsha* does have rhyme, each quatrain rhyming *abab*. The opposite is, indeed, a truer argument: other things being equal, the absence of rhyme would indicate an earlier origin of the verse. And, two hundred years or more later when the first copy of *Nūrnāma* came to be written, rhyme had become popular and necessary for verse under the predominant influence of Persian. Nor may we underestimate the predeliction of folk poetry or scribes and calligraphists to substitute rhyme and more familiar word wherever possible or even to change the sense of the verse somewhat for the sake of rhyme, particularly when these slight changes and easy exercises in verse would, in the words of Ibn Khaldūn, confirm their "attachment to certain opinions and schools of thought".

1. See NN, pp. 82, 14-18.
2. ibid., pp. 17-18. 'Blank verse' is here wrongly used for unrhymed verse.

We are as little certain of the text of Lal Ded's *vaakh* as of the facts of her life. She has left us no manuscript in her own hand nor any attested and signed by her, nor again has any manuscript of her *vaakh* come down to us written by a contemporary or near contemporary of hers, like, for instance, the manuscript copies of Shitikantha's *Mahānayaprakāsha*. But considering her life and times, there is nothing extraordinary in this. She did not write for publication nor as a contribution to knowledge by a person of learning. Indeed, she did not even put her *vaakh* in writing. They were the spiritual outpourings of her soul; and the devotees heard them and memorised them and, in accordance with the custom of the time, circulated them by word of mouth as gnosis only to those who were fellow-seekers. Someone, perhaps, recorded them, not all of them but only the few he happened to hear or learn from somebody who had heard them. Someone else recorded some of these *vaakh* as well as some others he happened to have heard himself or learn from others. And so on and on till they became part of the repertoire of the itinerant village minstrel and, later still, of our *sūfiāna kalām*, Kashmiri classical music, to be sung as sacred invocation at the start of the *Majlis-e-m'ārifīn*, the assembly of sufis or spiritual seekers. As more time passed and the language gradually and imperceptibly underwent change, many words became obsolete and difficult to understand. The people, majority of whom had by now become Muslim, lost all touch with the past tradition, and much of what Lal Ded had said, many words and phrases of her *vaakh*, their nuances and rich philosophical and yogic connotation, became almost meaningless to them. Small wonder, then, that the *sūfianā kalām* musicians and, more so, the professional but mostly unlettered itinerant minstrels took liberties with the text of the *vaakh*, patching them up as best as they could and, sometimes, added to them or substituted words and even lines of their own for the words and lines of the original which had ceased to have any meaning for them or for the vast majority of their listeners both

Muslim and Hindu, the Hindu also having become by now more familiar with Persian than with Sanskrit or Old Kashmiri. Moreover, other pious people, dervishes, fakīrs and sādhūs, either recited these *vaakh* as they found them or helped in the process of making them easier to understand by adding to them and by substituting more familiar words of Perso-Arabic origin for the less familiar ones of old Sanskrit, e. g., *lā makān* for *prakāshasthān*; *tsong* for *dīp* ; *maikhānas* for *althānas; dyut jalāv* for *hunī ākār*. Or, sometimes, some of them also composed *vaakh* and verse-sayings which, sometime after, began to circulate as Lal Ded's *vaakh*. This could happen as recently as 1956 when Shri J.L.K. Jalālī M. A. brought out (in his own words) "the present collection of 38 vakyas, so far unpublished".[1] This collection, says he, "has emanated from a Mahātma and has been communicated to me through Ramchandji Mallā. Other Vakyas have also been obtained from the same source". These other 'Vakyas' have not yet seen the light of day presumably because good sense has prevailed and the 'Vakyas' already published have been found out to be what they truly are, namely, an "emanation from a Mahātma", certainly not the creation of Lal Ded. This change, even mutilation, has occurred not only in the process of oral circulation but also in the process of recording the *vaakh* and preserving them in manuscripts. Speaking of the latter, what Anand Kaul says of *Nūrnāma*[2] applies equally to *Lalla vaakh* : "The pity is that what they [gnomic poets] had to say they taught orally to their disciples, and their sayings were written after their dates in the Persian character, without punctuation or diacritical marks. Thus defectively recorded, they have become inextricably confused and full of interpolations by disciples, imitators and rhapso-

1. JLKJ, Epilogue. Six of these 38 *vaakh*, viz., Nos. 4, 15, 22, 29, 31 and 38, occur in Anand Kaul's *Lalla Yogishwari* as Nos. 31, 35, 40, 75, 3 and 46 respectively, published in several volumes of the *Indian Antiquary* as early as 1930-33.
2. NR, p. 1, paragraphs 4 and 5.

dists. Whatever was noted by anyone person in the margin of his treasured private copy by way of interpretation was regarded by the next owner or copyist as part of the text: there was no means of distinguishing *addenda* from mere *marginalia*, for they knew not that it was impossible to alter a word in such sayings without altering it for the worse. The correct reading of an old manuscript has, therefore, become a very intricate task.

"I obtained two copies of *Nūrnāma* and both of them had shared the fate described above."

In these circumstances and in the absence of all external evidence, we have to fall back upon the internal evidence of the text itself, whatever its probative force. Even this has severe limitations. There are no allusions or references in *Lalla vaakh* to contemporary events or to any events that can be firmly dated. To determine their authenticity, therefore, we are left with only the evidence of diction and prosody, and the quality and cast of thought, the way it is organized in the process of expression, in a word, the characteristic style of Lal Ded. Fortunately, there are a fairly substantial number of them which are indubitably hers and have been up to date regarded so by all. These can help us as nothing else can to tell her *vaakh* from those that have been the creation of others but are wrongly ascribed to her, for these do not bear the characteristic Lal Ded stamp. Caution, however, is necessary in at least two respects. First, we may not test the authenticity of her *vaakh* merely on the basis of anyone of these criteria, taken singly. The better test will rather be the totality of impression gathered from judging the *vaakh* in question on the bases of all the criteria as a whole. Secondly, it should be evident that a trustworthy judgement can be based only on a careful and sufficient study of the whole body of *Lalla vaakh* with all their variants (of which there are indeed many) and not on a selection or a part of them. It need hardly be stressed that whatever the criteria and their soundness and sufficiency, we have to depend ultimately on the sensibility and discrimi-

nation, the critical intelligence, of the critic. Perhaps, a third caution should be suggested, namely, a comparison, linguistic and literary, with whatever Kashmiri literature is available to us of the contemporary period, both preceding and succeeding *Lalla vaakh*, which would obviously demand a competent knowledge of works like Shitikantha's *Mahānaya-prakāsha*, Bhattavatara's *Bānāsuravadha*, Ganaka Prashasta's *Sukhadukhacaritam* and, possibly, also of the snatches and fragments of old Kashmiri that occur as quotations in several Trika Darshana texts. But there is herein a snag, already hinted at. Undoubtedly *Lalla vaakh* were composed in, what may appropriately be called Old Kashmiri[1]; but for reasons already discussed above, they have come down to us in a language surprisingly modern. They were transmitted by word of mouth and underwent change according as the language itself changed insensibly from generation to generation. "Nevertheless," as Sir George Grierson rightly observes, "respect for the authoress and the metrical form of the songs have preserved a great many archaic forms of expression."[2] And I may add, this preservation has been possible because some men and women in the direct line of *gurushishyaparamparā*, in the direct line, that is, of guru-disciple succession, memorised the *vaakh* to become a part of their daily morning prayer and *swādhyāya*, self-study. Obviously, it is they who preserved them with religious care and exactitude; for even whlle they did not understand words and phrases here and there, they "had the honesty to refrain from any conjectural emendation to make the verses intelligible". It is for this reason that Sir George holds "such a record in some respects more valuable than any written manuscript".

On the basis of all that has been said in the preceding pages, it is possible to make reasonable claims (critical pro-

1. Sometimes the language of many verse-sayings of Lal Ded and even Nund Rishi is labelled "Panditi" or "Sanskriti" which, as literary nomenclature, is both mischievous and absurd.
2. LV, p. 7.

babilities, not certainties) with regard to the authenticity of *Lalla vaakh* as we have them now. Firstly, we may outright reject the three verses[1] with the refrain, *wuni chay sul ta tshāndun yār*, for they are, what we call "vatsan" verses of a Kashmiri ghazal by one Aziz Khan of the early nineteenth century.[2] We may also reject (a) another *vaakh* ascribed to Lal Ded by Rev. J. Hinton Knowles[3] which has a reference to "tehsildar", an institution unknown in Lal Ded's day, and otherwise also, very evidently a verse of sometime in the nineteenth century, even for its diction and its obviousness, and (b) the verse, really a *vatsun*, a Kashmiri ghazal, with the refrain, *lolakī me' sapzu's fān*[4], a genre of at least two centuries later, with everything, diction, thought content, allusions, prosody, proclaiming it most assuredly not to be Lal Ded's. There are three verses which occur in *Lalla vaakh* as well as in Rūpa Bhawāni's *Rahasyopadesha*; and I am persuaded to affirm that two[5] of these are Rūpa Bhawāni's, not Lal Ded's. Rūpa Bhawāni's verses were written during her very lifetime, for she became quite an institution and gathered round her, in a cult, many disciples, including members of the large family to which her father, Pandit Mādhava Dhar, belonged. She was herself lettered and knew Persian as well as Sanskrit, wrote letters and, very likely, set down some of her compositions in writing. Her verses became a daily religious recitation of her disciples till very recent times. It is not, however, improbable that she, like Nund Rishī long before her and many other lesser known sufis and saints, in their reverence for Lal Ded, modelled some of their verses on hers, which seem to be, with slight or substantial variation, resettings of her thoughts and very words. Such is, for instance, Rūpa Bhawāni's verse beginning, *yava tūd tsaliv timay val ambar*,

1. LV, Nos. 99, 100 and LVA No. 4.
2. NN, pp. 19-20.
3. LVA, No. 6.
4. AKR, p. 162.
5. AK, Nos. 1 and 11.

the original[1] of it being very probably Lal Ded's for the theme is what she would have said and is in consonance with what she, as a matter of fact, has said and the manner in which she has said it.

Then there are 35 *vaakh* which, with variants, occur both in *Lalla vaakh* and *Nūrmāma*. It would be tedious and perhaps out of place here, to embark on a textual criticism of each one of them. A close scrutiny of Nund Rishi's *shrukh* does, however, disclose that "after the lapse of two or three hundred years when the earliest *Nūrnāma*-s were put in writing, not only must the language have undergone change but, quite probably, several of Lal Ded's verses must have come to be attributed to Nund Rishi and vice versa. However that be, his *shrukh* are mostly didactic in content and exhortative in tone, in most of which he speaks of the transitoriness of life and its pleasures and exhorts people to cultivate self-discipline and piety. They have undoubtedly enriched the language with wise saws and pithy sayings that have become proverbial".[2] But Lal Ded is different : "It is the stamp of sincerity and intensity of her mystic experience and the authenticity of her poetic expression revealed by an energy of idiom and homely but terse imagery unsurpassed till this day that has given her verse-sayings a lasting eminence both in the people's minds and in Kashmiri literature. . . In her verses we find a self-certifying passionate apprehension of mystical truths which is the mark of a God-realized saint."[3] Rahman Rahi[4] has more explicitly drawn the difference in these words : "Even Sheikh Nūr-ud-dīn's verses, called *shrukh*, which superficially in their theme and content resemble Lal Ded's *vaakh*, cannot compare with them. Lal Ded's *vaakh* are live embers, while the Sheikh's

1. LV, No. 28 and No. 38 (RB, p. 18).
2. *Studies in Kashmiri* by Jayalal Kaul, pp. 30 and 33.
3. ibid., p. 179.
4. *Koshur Shiraza*, August 1966, pp. 10-16, Vol. 3, No. I (J & K Academy) tr. by Jayalal Kaul for *An Anthology of Indian Literatures* (ed. K. Santhanam, Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi, 1969).

shrukh are like sparks in dying ashes. The background of both may almost be the same but, in the process of poetic creation, something has intervened which accounts for the wide difference between the poetry of the mystic poets. The *shrukh* of Sheikh Saheb do not communicate the experience as much as the moral lesson that can be derived from it. They do not penetrate and stir the heart. The similes and metaphors he employs are illustrative and explanatory, they do not become live symbols of a deeply felt experience." There is, besides, the prosodic difference. The *shrukh* are more strictly correct, evidently patterned on Persian *bahar* (quantitative metre), than the *vaakh* of Lal Ded. The *vaakh* are more flexible and loose, and Sir George Grierson has (I believe rightly) discerned stress accent in her verses, four stresses to each *pada* or line. I have come to the conclusion that the devotees and disciples of Nund Rishi, the itinerant minstrels, the scribes and copyists have, even during the two or three hundred years which elapsed between his death and the recording of his *shrukh* in *Nūrnāma*-s, done with the *shrukh* what they have done with the *vaakh* of Lal Ded. They have substituted the more familiar word, sometimes even a "better" word, that is, a word more in conformity with orthodoxy, and certainly made the verse more correct metrically, even though it did not necessarily improve the sense and as in some verses common to both Lal Ded and Nund Rishi which are, more probably, Lal Ded's even changed the sense for the worse in, e. g., *Kyāh kara pāntsan dahan ta kāhan.*[1]

Moreover, besides the 35 verse-sayings recorded both in *Lalla vaakh* and *Nūrnāma*-s out of which I ascribe not more than 15 to Lal Ded, there are very many more which have been ascribed to her but which, on the grounds of the internal evidence discussed above, are very probably not hers. I have listed them in the Concordance and the 'Note on the Text'[2],

1. LV, 90 compare with NN, 217. Also compare LV, Nos. 4, 98, 107 with NN, Nos. 207, 200, 186 respectively. 2. at the end.

and left out as many as 120 of them on a reasonably liberal estimate. I have rejected Sri Jalāli's 32[1] vaakh as unauthentic though, in the words of the editor, "the collection of 38 *vākyas*, so far unpublished, has emanated from a Mahatma." I reject them because, apart from a phrase here and there, they are anaemic generalities and obvious mystical slipslop—verses such as any "quetistic pietistic" Kashmiri Pandit *sādhū*, of whom there have been quite a few till recently, could have composed. Even the 75-verse collection of Pandit Anand Kaul contains quite a few of such verses, trite and obscure, obscurity hiding triteness, as for instance, (a) verse 10 (translation in his own words) :

> I am nothing and I was nothing,
> No, into my nothingness (i. e., transitory
> existence) something or other penetrated.
> I worshipped Siva, I saw Vishnu,
> No, into my nothingness (i. e., transitory
> existence) something or other penetrated.

Or, (b) verse 57, which contradicts not only what Lal Ded says in other verses but what she, as a Trika Saiva, would not say, namely, that to be a householder is to invite a dire calamity like "a mountain crashing down on you". Besides, it is straining our credulity to ask us to believe that Lal Ded could have used expressions like *bad boy* and *darogh-go*, used in this *vaakh*, or that these Persian words could have been known at all in her days by common people.

Or (c) part obviousness and part obscurity of verses 47 and 48, the latter in translation given here.

> That side Himself, this side Himself :
> He Himself does not meet Himself.
> Besides, not a grain will penetrate into Him :
> That, Sir, is a wonder indeed.

1. See supra.

" 'A wonder indeed' but, Sir, what does it mean ?" One may ask.

Or (d) the obvious silliness of verse 62 :

> Siva will not be pleased with you
>   if you mutter 'Siva', 'Siva',
> If you bear Him in mind, always,
>   your body will glisten like ghee.
> Then feed your body on ghee to make it strong.
> If you do not feed your body on ghee,
>   better let some one else have the ghee.

This certainly is not Lal Ded. Lal Ded has "fire, spirit and fervour, with a great wealth of picturesque imagery"[1]; but there is here not even a spark. In these and many other verses, a hundred and odd, ascribed to her, there is hardly even the sensation of heat of the embers of a dying fire. They are cold ash from an ash-can.

1. Rahmān Rāhī in *Koshur Shīrāza*, August 1966, p. 11 and RCT, p. 165.

CHAPTER THREE

LALLA VAAKH : THE CONTENT

suy mas me' Lalli cav panunuy vaakh

I, Lalla, drank the wine of mine own *vaakh*.

I HAVE, in the last chapter, discussed the text of *Lalla vaakh*, and rejected a hundred and odd of them as unauthentic. A more strict application of the criteria of 'internal' evidence would reject more verse-sayings and, perhaps, accept not more than a hundred of them, at the outside. But, whatever the number of Lal Ded's authentic verse-sayings, we can, even from the reduced number of her *vaakh*, say, 80 to 100 of them, piece together her biography, the biography of a saint, the significance of which lies in the growth and attainment of spiritual realisation. Incidentally, we can, in the very process of piecing together her spiritual life story, understand something of her philosophy, her outlook on life, and her message.

At the very outset, it should be pointed out that the *vaakh* already available have not been arranged on any clear-cut basis.[1] Lal Ded did not compose her *vaakh* as a deliberate contribution to literature or philosophy, she did not sing them nor write them for *kīrtan*, devotional recitation and singing,

1. Except in LD.

as the later-day Bhakta saint-singers did. Nor was she a preacher, an evangelist, or a reformer. Her verses, mainly the outpourings of her soul, are an expression of her inner experience and, sometimes though rarely, of her comment on what she observed around her. This notwithstanding, it is possible so to arrange the *vaakh* as to facilitate discerning her progressive spiritual ascent, and they have been so placed here in their translation at the end. There are, we may discern, a few (not many though) *vaakh* which express the state of her mind when she has an overpowering sense of desolation and aloneness. She seems to have developed an almost oppressive sense of emptiness within her and in the world about her. She feels alone, towing her boat upon the sea with a rope of untwisted thread; she is wasting away like water in cups of unbaked clay; there is a yawning pit underneath and she is dancing overhead. It is not the usual sad generalities about the world, this vale of tears, this house of pain, and the like that we have; on the contrary, we have a direct impact of her misery, her tension, her earnest expostulation with herself :

> I will weep and weep for you, my Soul.
> The world has caught you in its spell.
> Though you cling to them with the anchor of steel,
> Not even the shadow of the things you love
> Will go with you when you are dead.

She feels helpless and lonely, like one who, when the day is done and the light fails, finds herself on a causeway with rickety bridges, and a long way to go and her pockets empty, not a cowrie to pay the ferryman to take her across the broad river. She sees around her and is oppressed at the sight of inequality and injustice, a rich man, an utter fool, beating his cook for some fault in cooking his dainty dishes while a man of learning, for want of food, drops down dead like a sere leaf in winter wind. There is, too, the fear of death, of Death's apparitors preparing to drag, 'early or late', the bleeding bodies

of their victims. She has observed that the glories of blood and state—

> A royal fly-whisk, sunshade, chariot and throne,
> Merry revels, pleasures of the theatre, a bed of cotton down,

—none of these symbols of rank and power go with man when he is dead. And she asks :

> What can dispel the fear of death ?

Nothing endures here, nothing that one could cling to for security. There is continuous change. She sees a hearth ablaze but, in a moment, there is neither smoke nor ash. It is the mother of Pandavas but, a short while after, she is but a Potter's aunt. Time hath no stop and brings with it inevitable transitoriness of life and things, resulting in man's feeling of utter insecurity. We seem to be bound to the ever-recurring wheel of birth and death :

> For ever we come, for ever we go,
> For ever in a round of birth and death,
> From nothingness to nothingness.

Lal Ded is confused and dazed and her thoughts are in a whirl. All this makes her think and reason with herself, and she asks obstinate questions about "the burthen and mystery and the weary weight of this unintelligible world" which, for the moment, seem to overwhelm her. Her load, albeit a load of candy (of worldly pleasures), is indeed heavy and as she complains, it has bent her body double under its weight. Yet she seems to argue with herself,

> There is a mystery here abides,
> A something there is for us to know.

These verses give a clue to her awakening to the insufficiency

of this 'mighty world of eye and ear' and, what is more, to the mystery that abides therein, and they also express her intense yearning to know for herself the Great Unknown. Out of this intense yearning the cry issues forth :

> Would God I were to reach my home !

Lal Ded undoubtedly had, what Trika calls, the *Shaktipāt* (the descent of Shakti), the divine grace, which urges her on to tread the Path with unswerving determination. And this she did, and embarked, never to turn back, on what some mystics call, the Way of Purification. Her Guru, the Venerable Siddha, told her to withdraw her gaze within to gain the knowledge of her Higher Self; and she had firm faith in his word and her success in the end (*me' gav vākh ta vatsun*) :

> For whoever strives must soon arrive,
> at the city of his choice.

Lal Ded has given us a number of verses in which it is easy to find an answer to the irrepressible question : What was the discipline Lal Ded practised ? She speaks of her decisive turning away from the ambition of wealth and power and the pleasures of sense; of her patience, infinite patience, quietly to suffer pain and poverty; of her inner struggles, her storms and stresses and disappointments, in her own picturesque imagery, the hard knocks and blows of the carder, more knocks and kicks from the weaver, then being dashed on the washing stone and rubbed with fuller's earth and soap by the washerman, till she is cut piece by piece by the tailor, thus, symbolically, from the cotton pod to the finished piece of cloth, undergoing the various disciplinary processes :

> Thus was it that I, Lalla, at last
> entered the High Estate of God.

She is more explicit in other verse-sayings. She cleansed the

mirror of her heart for the Truth to shine unmistakable and clear. She took the middle path, of moderation in food and drink, neither pandering to her appetites nor undergoing extreme penance. Nor did she hanker after the *siddhi*-s, the miraculous powers which she condemned as fraud and jugglery (*kapaṭa tsarith*). Calm and unruffled by anger or desire, she became indifferent to the "pairs of opposites", praise and blame, respect and disrespect, good and evil report, joy and sorrow.

> Ill or well, whatever befalls
> Let it come.
> My ears will not hear,
> My eyes will not see.

She recommends non-attachment and desireless action, action as dedication to God (*lāgi-ro'st pushrun svātmas*).

In dealings with fellowmen, she would have us cultivate politeness, forbearance and a friendly manner. She does not recommend withdrawal from the world. She herself set her face against discrimination between man and man on whatever account, nor did she abstain from partaking of food and drink with any "brother" man (*anas khynas kyāh chum dvesh*).[1] She emphasized (and this is significant) that only he who slays the highway robbers (*vatanā'sh*), Greed, Lust and Pride, and, in humility and loving kindness, is a servant to all (*logun dās*), is the true seeker after God. It is surely he who regards his fellowmen and himself alike (*so'm mon*) that hath seen the God of gods.

"An idol is a stone" (*deva vaṭā*), and Lal Ded, in strict accordance with the Trika injunction[2], would not recommend

1. "*nātra shuddhirna cāshuddhir na bhakhsyādi vicāranam*". *Mālinī-vijaya Tantra*, XVIII, pp. 74-76. Here there is neither (ceremonial) purification nor pollution, nor even considerations of (what is pure for) eating, etc.
2. *mrcchaila dhāturatnādibhavam lingam no pujyet,*
yajetādhyātmikam lingam yatra līnam carācaram (ibid., XVIII, p. 2).

the worship of idols. The true worship of "Sahaz" was the constant remembrance of God with true devotion (*sadbhāva svari ne'ty*). And she spoke vehemently against animal sacrifice. Nor did she think much of pilgrimages to holy places and sacred rivers. "If *mukti* were to be earned by bathing in holy waters, why do the fish not obtain it ?"[1]

Then, there was her intense love and longing that would not let her be, and she set forth in search of Him and "toiled and toiled" for days and nights, and strove even beyond her strength (*hal ko'rmas rasa nishi ti*). She found his door bolted and barred but would not turn back, and, indeed, her longing became keener and she sat :

> Just there on bended knees,
> In utter surrender unto Him.

Besides, even while the essential process of purification on the moral level goes on, a technique of mental discipline is necessary to bring about the transition from the ordinary waking (*jāgrati*) consciousness to the higher consciousness of Atman or Self. This *dhyāna* (meditative) yoga is indispensable in order to gain control over the mind, its movements and modifications (*vrttīs*) so that it can be stilled at will, and the lamp of truth can shine steady and bright "as in a windless place".[2] This discipline of hers was, as she puts it, the constant "counting of her breath" (*ga'nzrith panun shvās*), that is intently watching her life breath (*prāna*). Says she :

1. Then watch your *prāna*, day and night,
   And stay where you are.

(The lingam made of earth, stone, metal or jewels should not be worshipped. Worship only the lingam of Self in which all living and lifeless objects are absorbed).

1. "*Yadi muktirjalasnānāt mīnānim sā na kim bhavet*" (*Tantraloka*, Vol. III, p. 120).
2. The *Gita*, VI. 19.

2. Whom will you worship, O stubborn Pandit ?
   Unite your life breath and your mind.

3. And, on the wheels of *prāna* and *apāna*, guide
   the chariot aright.

Of her own Yoga discipline, Lal Ded says that it purified her *antahkarana* (*manas*, *buddhi* and *ahankāra*), developed in her "equality" (*samatvam*) and non-attachment (*lāgiro'st advya man*), and suspended the transformations of her mind (*tsyath go'l*).

> Continually I trained my mind
> to suspend its processes and thoughts.
> Then (in the windless calm), the flame of the Lamp,
> shining steady and bright,
> revealed my true nature unto me.

Not only that. It roused her Kundalini which, "cutting" through the six Forests (*Cakra*-s), awoke the Digit of the Moon[1] (*she'van tsa'tith shashikal vuzu'm*), the nectar flowed down suffusing her whole being; and

> By means of the mystic syllable OM,
> Lalla merged in her Cit-Jyoti.[2]

Thus was Lal Ded ushered in the next higher state of the Way of Illumination. As she herself says :

> When I absorbed the *Pranava* in myself,
> I discarded the Path of the Six[3]
> and took the true Path.[4]
> It led me straight to the Abode of Light.

1. The mystic moon in Sahasrāra (the crown of the head).
2. Consciousness which is Illumination.
3. "Shaṭ Adhva", the six paths according to *ānavopāya*, namely, *varṇa*, *mantra*, *pada*, *kalā*, *tattva* and *bhuvana* (*Tantrasāra* by Abhinavagupta, p. 47).
4. Now Lal Ded took the easy and direct path of *Shāmbhavopāya* (See PR. Sutras 13 and 18).

This illumination is the central fact of Lal Ded's life, her great achievement, but she does not rest here. From brute matter and desire-nature, the lower prakriti, the manifested universe, to the Higher Self within, and thence (to quote her oft-repeated phrase) the void merging in the Void (*shūnyas shūnyāh mīlith gav*), to the Transcendent, is great achievement and rare. But this is not all. The eternal unmanifested (*akhsaram, avyaktam*) is not enough. For, Prakriti and Purusha, the ever-changing Manifest of name and form and the Witnessing Self standing aloof, are not two disparate realities. The world and, indeed, the whole manifest are not an illusion, nor is the Supreme Cit non-active, as Brahmavāda, the doctrine of Brahman expounded by Shankara Vedānta, holds it to be. According to Trika Saiva, Cit is absolute in its free will, free to do whatever it wishes (*citi svatantrā*).[1] The Supreme Self, Paramasiva, is both transcendent and immanent (*vishvottīrnam vishvamayamca*).[2] He is, in Lal Ded's language, *tsidānanda gyānaprakāsha*, that is, Cit-Ānanda, not only Cit, Pure (undifferentiated) Consciousness, but also Ānanda, Absolute Bliss which, in Trika, is also Absolute Will (*svātantrya*) and Shakti, not only Prakāsha (Light, Illumination) but also dynamic Jnāna which, in Trika again, is "Aham Vimarsha" (Consciousness conscious of Itself), Psychic Energy, Parāshakti. And the two are an undivided unity. As Lal Ded experiences it :

vuchum Sivas Shaku'th mīlith to vāh

(And saw Siva and Shakti sealed in One.)

Here she was immersed in the Lake of Immortality (*lay ka'rmas amritasaras*), that is, in Trika technique, she had *samāvesha*, absorption in the Divine. Shakti is the Heart of

1. PR, Sutra 1, pp. 34-35 and 109. Citi (fem. gender) and Cit are synonymous.
2. ibid., commentary, Sutra 8, p. 56, l. 3.

the Supreme Lord : *hṛdayam Parameshitah.*[1] The Lord is to be seen in the transcendent as well as in the immanent, not only in the witnessing Self but also in the world of name and form, in the passing show of each and every thing. And so Lal Ded ascends to the realisation of, what Trika Darshana calls, the Anuttara, the Highest, the Supreme, the God Who, as the rider, mounts upon

> Siva (is) the horse
> Whose saddle Vishnu holds
> And Brahma the stirrups.

Lal Ded has the direct perception of One Self, "Sahaz," abiding in all, of the unity of all in the One Self :

> *tsu' nā bo nā dhyey nā dhyān. . .*
>
> Here there is neither thou nor I,
> No "postured thought", nothing to contemplate,
> Even the All-Creator is forgot.

This is what mystics regard as the highest state, the Way of Unity; in Trikashāstra, it is not the temporary (*tāvatkāl*) samadhi but *jīvanmukti*, not pure contemplative state for the time being, but constant Self-awareness, firm consciousness of identity with Cit, in all states and conditions in the world — it is this that constitutes liberation of one still alive and embodied. As the *Spandashāstra*[2] says, "He who knows thus and regards the whole world as a play of the Divine (*kriḍātvenākhilam jagat*), being ever united (with the Universal Consciousness) is without doubt liberated even while alive." As Lal Ded says :

> *tsu'y he Nārān, ta yim kam vih*

1. *Parāpraveshika* by Kshemaraja.
2. *Spandakārika* by Vasugupta, nisyanda II, verse 5.

Thou art all this, and this and this;
There is none else but Thee.
What then is the meaning of Thy sport ?

And says she :

They who have known the Supreme Self,
Cit-Ānanda, Jnāna-Prakāsha,
They are the *jīvan-mukta*-s. . .

The experience of the identification of the individual consciousness with the Universal Consciousness has to be carried out into the experience of the outer world, for *iti Sivam*[1], all this is Siva, all this is the form of Siva, *etat sarvam Sivasvarūpameva.*[2] As Lal Ded sees it :

Sivamay tsarātsar zag pashyā

All things, living or lifeless,
and the universe itself,
are seen pervaded by Siva Himself.

And, as has been said in the *Krama-sutra*-s[3], "by the compulsion of *āvesha* (*āveshavashāt*), there is first an entrance from the external to the internal, and then from the internal to the external". And Lal Ded :

a'ndryum prakāsh nyabar tsho'nḍum

(Then I winnowed abroad the inner light.)

As I find it, there is a remarkable correspondence between the experience of Lal Ded as given in *Lalla vaakh* and that of *Saiva Siddha*-s as related in their *Trikashāstra*-s, and many

1. PR, Sutra 20.
2. ibid., pp. 94, 95.
3. ibid., quoted in the commentary on Sutra 19, p. 92.

more parallel passages could be given than there is room for here. This should undeniably prove that she was a Saiva Yogini, not only because she uses, whenever she needs to use them, the technical terms only of Trika Darshana but, more so, because of her concept of God, her yoga technique, her own *anubhava*, direct perception and experience—all these are those of Trika system.

Sir George Grierson and D.R. Barnett agree that Lal Ded was a devout follower of "the Kashmir branch of the Saiva religion"[1], and Sir Richard Carnac Temple also admits that "Lalla's *Wākh* show her as a Shaiva of the Kashmir Trika School".[2] It is, therefore, surprising that, in their commentary on her *vaakh*, Sir George and Dr. Barnett interpret them, whenever possible[3], as if she were a Brahmavādinī (a Shankara Vedāntin) and a Haṭhayogini. Sir Richard categorically decrees that "she has recognised that the external world is an illusion".[4] Conditioned as the Orientalists were, they were reinforced in their conditioning by the current Vedanta, and they did not accept, and some of them were not willing to accept, that there could be, and indeed there were, advaita systems other than the commonly propagated Vedanta which refuted the assumption that the world was *Māyā* (an illusion) or that the highest concept of God was that of an Unmanifested Inactive Impersonal Being (*Sat*). If it be conceded, as it must be, that Lal Ded was a Saiva Yogini of Kashmir School, it must also be conceded that the world to her was not a hallucination, a cosmic joke, and that she was not a Haṭhayogini. The misunderstanding and confusion has, I daresay, been confirmed by, if it has not arisen from, a hasty and super-

1. LV, p. 1, l.16, p. 7, ll. 14-15.
2. RCT, p. 166.
3. See LV, p. 24, l.20; p. 33, l.24, p. 107, l.14, p. 119, l.35, where the use of the word 'illusion' is a comment of the authors, not the meaning of any word or words Lal Ded has used. Nor is the use of this word demanded or even warranted by the context.
4. ibid., p. 166.

ficial understanding of some epithets used about the world and man's brief sojourn in it. There is, however, no such epithet or word that, even by implication, could convey to me that Lal Ded regarded the world, as such, an illusion or human life a total unredeemed wretchedness and sin. What she speaks of and what, perhaps, misled these scholars is Kashmiri phrases : *vishyamis samsāranis pāshyas* (the tangled web of samsara), *muhu'c māy* (love of delusion), and *bhavaruz* (the sickness of the world).[1] These are the only such phrases that I have been able to discover, and none of them can mean that Lal Ded regarded the world as an illusion. I know Sir George has translated the phrase *muhu'c māy* as "love for the world, begotten of illusion", and explained *bhavaruz* (in the section on vocabulary) as "the disease of existence, existence compared to a disease". They are explanatory comments of his own rather than the meanings of these phrases. As regards the phrase, *vishyamis samsāranis pāshyas* (the tangled web of samsāra) and Sanskrit phrases like *samsāravish*[2] (the poison of samsara) used sometimes by Trika philosophers and hymn writers, I cannot do better than quote the words,[3] incontrovertible and enough, of Jaideva Singh : "It is not the world *qua* world which is poison, but the 'wandering through' of the jiva as a being disintegrated from Reality, cut off from his Innermost Centre, which is poison."

Nor does Lal Ded speak with disgust, as something intrinsically sinful and evil, of the human body. She does not recommend austerities and mortification of the body :

> Wear clothes to ward off cold,
> Eat to satisfy your hunger.

She speaks of the body as a vehicle for spiritual growth. It is a *dharmakshetra*, field of dharma—

1. LV, verses 6, 67, 8 respectively.
2. PR, Invocatory shloka.
3. ibid., p. 108.

If while alive, you do not see Him,
How will you see Him after death ?

It is the abode of God (*vuchum Pandit parani gare*)[1]—

I saw the Lord in my own home.

"This very body," says she, "has splendour and light" (*tīz tay sor prakāsh*).

I have in vain searched for an expression of the ascetic's disgust in Lal Ded. There are only two instances which may be construed as such, but in both of them I believe that the compulsion of his predilection has made Grierson accept the worse, and the inappropriate, variant. This can be illustrated even from the English rendering of them :

1. Grierson (verse 7) :

Lord, I have not known myself or other than myself,
Continually have I mortified *this vile body*.[2]

Var., Rājānaka Bhāskara :

Lord, I have not known myself nor Thou,
I have only known this one body (of mine).

Evidently, the latter variant fits the context, the correct meaning here of the word *par* is 'the Supreme' not 'the stranger'; while *yi kva-dih* (this vile body) is a corruption of *yīkuy dih* (this one body).

2. Grierson (verse 28) :

Don but such apparel as will cause the cold to flee.

1. cf., "*deho devālayo devi*" (O Parvati, the body is a temple)—*Kulārnavah Tāntrah,* IX, 41.
2. Italics mine.

Eat but so much food as will cease hunger to cause.
O Mind ! devote thyself to discernment of
the Self and of the Supreme,
And recognize the body as but *food for forest crows.*[1]

Var., Rājānaka Bhāskara : The last line translated would be :

Take this as the counsel for the body, O Mind.

Not only does this suit the context better but there has been, evidently, misreading of *dehas vān kyā van* (to the body, counsel, what, tell) into *dīh van-kāvan* (the body, to jungle crows).

While the learned authors say that "Lalla was a devout follower of the Kashmir School of Saivism", they do not seem to have inquired into whether this School of philosophy regards the world as an illusion and whether the mental disciplines laid down by it are, on all fours, identical with the *Yoga-sūtra*-s as systematized by Pātanjali, not to speak of Haṭhayoga. The Trika does take note of *Yoga-sūtra*-s, makes references to it, and even uses the technical terms (as, for instance, Vedānta does with Sānkhya), but it lays down its own *upāya*-s[2], means and disciplines, among many[3] of which is the practice of *Prānāpāna*[4] referred to by Lal Ded. The very practice of the union of *prāna* and *apāna* (in Lal Ded's words : *kar manas ta*

1. Italics mine.
2. It lays down three broad *upāya*-s to get rid of the three *mala*-s (dross, ignorance) . *ānavopāya, shāktopāya* and *shāmbhavopāya.* The *mala*-s, which conceal Divine consciousness, are : *ānavamala,* reducing the Universal Consciousness to an *anu,* a small, limited entity; *māyīya-mala,* the limiting condition which makes a *jiva* conscious of differntiation, of multiplicity where there is unity; and *kārmamala,* the *mala* due to *vāsana*-s or impressions left on the mind by Karma.
3 & 4. "*Sa upāyo'tra bahuda : dhiyi prāne dehe tadanu bahirityānavataya* (That *upāya* here is of many kinds : in *buddhi,* in *prāna,* in the body and in the objects outside — these according to *ānava* (ānavopāya)." This is to say, any of them can be the *ālambana,* an object to grasp as the step of a ladder. (*Tantrasāra,* KSTS, XVII, by Abhinavagupta, p. 43, ll. 10-11.

pavanas sanghāṭh) is explicity laid down in the famous *Trika Āgama* entitled *Vijnāna Bhairava* (verse 64) : "*vayudvayasya samghaṭṭāt*; and it is said that by this practice the Yogi achieves equality (*samadrishṭatvam*).[1] Sir Richard knows that "they [the Saiva doctors] did not treat the material world as illusion (*māyā*), but as a manifestation (*ābhāsa*) of Siva through his female energy (*Shakti*)"[2]; and yet he sees no contradiction in saying, a hundred pages later[3], that, firstly, "the main exercise is Breath-control, by which is meant stopping the breath while intensely meditating", and, secondly, "she (Lalla) has recognized that the external world is all illusion". "Suppression of breath," says Sir George, "is one of the most necessary yoga exercises." It may be so according to Yoga, as such, but certainly not according to Trika where *prānādirodhena* is the spontaneous suspension of *prānāpāna* in *tanmayatā* (absorption) and not the controlling of the breath through the *kumbhaka* practice of Haṭhayoga. Nor are Kuṇḍalinī yoga practices as such indispensable for rousing the Kuṇḍalinī for, Trika says, that through the Saiva *upāya*-s it rises of itself effortlessly. Thus it is that Sir George has not explained certain expressions of Lal Ded in the sense in which they are used in Saivashāstra-s. For instance : in (a) *kumbuy brahmāṇḍas sum gare* (verse 34), where he interprets *kumbuy* as "only the kumbhaka exercise", though Rājānaka Bhāskara in his Sanskrit translation rightly interprets it as "the *citta* (mind) becoming one with the *vimarsha* of That".[4] For, *Kumba* or *ghaṭa* (a jar) is a favourite word of Saiva authors for the individual as against the cosmos (*brahmāṇḍa*). The meaning is clear : the individual consiousness building a bridge between itself and the Cosmic Consciousness.

1. *Prānāpāna samghaṭṭam anullikhitabhedam nirgamapravesha-vinākrtam shūnyākalpam dhyātva yoginah samadrishṭatvam udiyat.* (ibid., Shivopadhyaya's commentary).
2. RCT, pp. 69-70.
3. RCT, p. 166.
4. *Kṛtva cittam tadvimarshaikasāram*, LV, p. 54.

Or. in (b) *damāh dam ko'rmas daman-hāle* (verse 4), which he translates as, "slowly, slowly, did I stop my breath in the bellows-pipe of my throat". This would, in other words, be the *Bhastrika prānāyāma* or, even, the sufi *dhikr*. More probably, the line is, as Professor M. Hajini puts it.[1]

dama dama ko'rmas daman āye.

that is, "slowly, slowly, I held it (the mind) straight to the aim (*āye*) of restraint". Even if the word *daman* be taken to mean suppression, it would mean only, what Bhaskara calls, *prānādirodhena* as explained above and not "throttling up" the breath as Grierson understands it. Incidentally, it may be emphasized that Trika does not advocate suppression through ascetic practices, not even *tyāga* (renunciation); indeed, it recommends rather, what may succinctly be called, "skill in *bhoga*" (enjoyment), that is, with mind always directed towards the true Self. For want of space, the topic may not be further argued here; but it must be clearly emphasized that Trika disciplines are not Haṭhayogic disciplines, and certainly *not merely that*. We may quote only Sutra 18[2] and the relevant words of the commentary in translation : "Herein the means are : dissolution of *vikalpa*, *sankoca* and *vikāsa* of Shakti, cutting of the *vaha*-s, the practice (of the contemplation) of the *koti* (point, extremity) of the beginning and the end, etc." And Kshemaraja explains: "There is an easy means by which one can dispense with (*lit*. shatter) all the fetters of rigorous disciplines like *prānāyāma*, *mudrā*, *bandha*, etc."[3] Lal Ded was not a Haṭhayoginī but a Saiva Yoginī, and that makes for a real difference.

1. *Kā'shir Shā'yirī*, p. 3. no. 4, a Sahitya Akademi Publication, New Delhi.
2. PR, pp. 82-83.
3. PR, pp. 82-83.

CHAPTER FOUR

LAL DED : THE MAKER OF KASHMIRI

Yi rasani vwatsorum tī manthu'r

Whatever I uttered with my tongue,
became a *mantra.*

EVERY good man or good woman is, I believe, a beneficence, a blessing, whatever the extent of it; and the influence of Lal Ded's beneficence has been deep, durable and widespread. I shall, in a later chapter, attempt an over-all evaluation of this beneficence, its extent and how it worked. Here I shall discuss an aspect of it, viz., the linguistic and literary.

Lal Ded's *vaakh*, according to Grierson, claim the attention of the philologist as the oldest known specimen of the Kashmiri language".[1] This may be disputed. We believe Shitikanṭha's *Mahānayaprakāsha* to be an earlier work, possibly of the second half of the thirteenth century, and not of the latter half of the fifteenth century. Speaking of the language of *Mahānayaprakāsha*, Grierson writes[2] : "The work consists of about 94 verses in *old Kashmiri, not easy to understand.*[3]

1. LV, Preface, p. v. and p. 7, footnote 1.
2. Memoirs, Vol. XI, No. 2 (Asiatic Society of Bengal).
3. Italics mine.

The language is old, belonging to the period when Prākrit, in the Apabhramsa stage, had just merged into the language that finally became the Kashmiri of the present day. On enquiry, I have obtained the following additional information from Pandit Nityanand Shastri. Shitikanṭha was also author of the *Bāla bodhinī-nyāsa*, a *vyākhyā* on the *Bāla-bodhini* of his ancestor Kavindra Jagaddhara. In the introduction of this *vyākhyā*, Shitikanṭha states that he wrote it during the reign of Hasain Shāh[1], the son of Haidar Shah". This opinion has had to be revised in view of the fact that Shitikanṭha, the author of *Bāla-bodhinī*, has been found not to be the Shitikanṭha who wrote *Mahānayaprakāsha*. The manuscript, *Shitikanṭha Vamshāvalī*[2], gives the geneology of the author of *Bāla-bodhinī* as prepared by himself; and it gives the name of another Shitikanṭha, an ancestor, four generations earlier. He does not, however, mention that this ancestor wrote *Mahānayaprakāsha*, probably because he gives the names of only Sanskrit works, not Kashmiri. Moreover, the internal evidence of it has persuaded the Kashmiri scholars to place *Mahānayaprakāsha* as an earlier work.

Lal Ded's *vaakh* are a later work, of the fourteenth century; and there is no doubt that, unlike the earlier work, *Mahānayaprakāsha*, and even the later works of the first half of the fifteenth century, Bhattavatara's *Bānāsuravadha* and Ganaka Prashasta's *Sukhadukhacaritam* (which were written down), the *vaakh* have come down to us by oral transmission and have therefore been subjected to linguistic change with time. There is, however, no doubt that they have preserved many

1. Should be "Hasan Shāh" who came to the throne in 1472 and not "in 4583 (Kālīyuga) equivalent to A. D. 1482" as given by Grierson.
2. I owe this information to Sri Dinanath Yach, Head Pandit, Research and Publications Department, Srinagar, who has read the manuscript. Unfortunately, the owner took it back from him, and it has not been traced again.

archaic forms of expression[1], and it should not be impossible to reconstruct, so to say, what some of them would be in the original. Indeed, we do have some of them in almost their original, old Kashmiri form.[2] Lal Ded was a country girl and though she came of a Brahmin family and, very probably, was a lettered person, yet her language, its diction and forms, would be more colloquial and less learned than, say, that of *Mahānayaprakāsha*. The prosody of her verse-sayings is more loose and the rhyme-scheme more variable. It is possible therefore to risk the conjecture that Lal Ded's *vaakh*, even in their original form, have been a significant landmark in the linguistic transition from old to modern Kashmiri. They also provide a valuable example of how our language has insensibly changed in the course of centuries. As they have come down to us, the *vaakh* are, their many archaic expressions, forms and pronunciation notwithstanding, easy to understand and surprisingly modern, so that we may be justified in regarding them as the earliest specimen of modern Kashmiri. This is the linguistic and philological importance of Lal Ded in the history of Kashmiri language.

Lal Ded has, however, not merely the chronological distinction of being placed first in time in the order of modern Kashmiri poets. She is, more significantly, the maker of *modern* Kashmiri, language as well as literature. As poet, in her own genre, *vaakh*, as well as generally, she remains unsurpassed. This appears to be the language of exaggeration; and I am consious of the fact that, often enough, we have double standards for critical judgement which we use in favour of the *mahākavis* (the great poets) of modern Indian literatures. I am conscious also of my inability to put across in an alien language the full import and impact of Lal Ded's *vaakh*. I

1. See the excellent note "On Lalla's Language" by Grierson, LV, pp. 128-143.
2. LV, Nos. 1, 2, 6, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 22, 23, 33, 47, 63, 64, 70, 79, 81. And also p. 128.

shall, however, attempt an analysis of three verse-sayings (indicating three moods or states), in their literal translation, so that the evaluation of her poetry is as close to the concrete as possible and not merely a string of adjectives of praise.

> The sling of my candy load has gone loose,
> The upright stretch of my body has become bent.
> How can I (bear the load and carry it) ?
> My Guru's word has been a loss-blister to me,
> I am become a shepherdless flock.
> How can I ?

I have advisedly put it as literal as can be. What is it she wishes to say ? Evidently, she has been carrying a load of candy, and carrying it easily as only a Kashmiri can, with a strong rope tied to the load on both the shoulders. Now the sling has loosened, and she cannot carry the load as well as she did. Why ? Because, it galls her back as it must and, what's more, she must bend her back double even to keep it steady, not to speak of carrying it. She has been going about in life enjoying the heavy weight of worldly pleasures and the sense of possession that goes with it; but now something has happened and she has begun to feel disillusioned. The load, albeit of candy, now galls her back and she asks : "How can I ?" We do not read this meaning into her verse. It is there in the next line. Her Guru has told her that this sweet load of candy has to be thrown away, and the sense of possession of it removed from her mind, if she would gain her freedom and walk upright in the world. For, he who would gain his soul must lose the world. She has not yet totally accepted the Guru's word which has been as painful to her as a blister which smarts and burns and wlll not let her rest. She is distracted, confused, undecided as a shepherdless flock, some going one way, some another and some yet a third way. For, this throwing away of the load demands a collective decision of all the senses, *indriya*-s, *manas* and *buddhi.*

Now, this is it, this wealth of meaning and rich nuance

concentrated in a few metaphors, themselves fresh from the mint with the stamp of power and memorability. They have not worn out their vigour nor grown stale, and they are still our current coin. They have also the stamp of intense feeling, of (almost) excruciation of the poet's experience which has an undeniable impact on the reader's mind.

2. Having cut the hide, you have
 pegged down yourself.
 What kind of seed had you sown to expect
 an abundant harvest ?

The contrast here is evident, between a dead hide and good seed which has the potency of life in it. The best you can do with a hide is to dress it, tan it, stretch and polish it but you cannot bring the animal to life. On the contrary, the living seed comes alive in the shape of a plant, a crop of grain, or a fruit-laden tree. Though apparently addressed as an advice-cum-admonition to a second person, it is really an expostulation with her ownself. And, Lal Ded does sometimes impart a mild shock and animation to her verse by an interrogation, by the vivid intimacy of address or personification as *ha māli*[1] *nātha*,[2] *ha tsitta*[3]; by abrupt openings like *kus mari* (who dies ?), *kyāh kara* (what shall I do ?); by a contrast as here, or by a quaint juxtaposition of unrelated things in a simile as in *gyānamārg chay hakawā'r* (the pathway of *jnāna* is a kailyard). The choice, she says, is there : will you be a taxidermist or a husbandman ? Will you merely cherish your body and stretch it out "over the world of enjoyment with the pegs of desire" or sow the living seed of God-remembrance that shall bear the harvest of spiritual blessing ? There are no stock phrases here, "no obviousness, no tameness which are the common faults of religious poetry." Nor is here the much

1. lit. O father, used as an address of respect, O Sir !
2. Lord !
3. O my Soul !

familiar wisdom, the much moralising of the lesser and less sure mystic poets. Nor again, is it a mere meditative quality. There is much cerebration, 'brain-work,' here as elsewhere in Lal Ded's verse-sayings.

> 3. By *abhyās* (practice), the *savikās* lifted to absorption,
> In the *gagan* (sky) merged the *sagun, tsrattā* !
> The *shūnya* (Void) dissolved, and the *Anāmay* remained.
> This is the *upadesh*, O Bhatta!

I have let some original words remain in the literal translation for they are technical terms and common Sanskrit words, very easily recognisable as such. Here the poet attempts almost the impossible; she gives, in a very few words her supreme experience. The *savikās*, this expanse of manifested creation, *lifted to* absorption *(layivo'thū)*. It is a matter of aseent, not descent, a matter of something happening by dint of constant effort. What happens is that the world of qualities, of names and forms, dissolves into the Void. And this happens (mark the adverb, an onomatopoeic word) *tsraṭṭā* !—all at once, suddenly, unexpectedly, with a forceful impact, a splash, like a cloudburst falling in a lake, a huge sheet of water falling in another sheet of water. It is like merging in like. For, the two, the *sagun* and the *gagan* are, in the ultimate analysis, but two aspects of the One Reality. But the *Anāmaya*, the Supreme, is not the Void, the Impersonal Transcendent without qualities and without form (*nirgun-nirākār*). He is that but He is more. He contains both the immanent as well as the trancendent. Here, if you like, is 'metaphysical audacity', not mere abstraction, dreamy and vague, but an experience, rare and remote no doubt, put into concrete words as a direct *anubhava*, something powerfully experienced.

These analyses should be enough to illustrate what we may call the characteristic style of Lal Ded, and the alchemy, the transforming power, of her poetry. For thoughts and ideas or experiences are not poetry. They become poetry

when the poet's imagination "bodies forth", that is, incarnates them and "turns them to shapes". Here is imagination transmuting deep metaphysical thinking into a felt sensation by means of word and symbol and their vitality. There is another sense in which it is true. Reading these verses again and again, one senses a feeling of reverence growing within oneself and a silent process of chastening and a deepening of (shall I say ?) self-awarness taking place. It becomes easy to understand why some pious people made it their religious duty to recite a select few of them and to make them a subject for reflection and meditation. That is their transforming power; and that is why it is true of quite a few of them, at any rate, that they are *mantra*-s. Like other *mantra*-s, they have their informing power, their *Devatā*, their indwelling spirit, which is the *tapas* and the *tejas*, the supreme *anubhava* and the vision, of Lal Ded herself.

This characteristic style and spirit, illustrated above, is the touchstone to test whether the *vaakh* ascribed to Lal Ded are authentic; they are authentic only in so far as they, in their style and spirit, come close to them; otherwise they are to be rejected as dross and counterfeit.

A detailed study of Lal Ded's *vaakh* will reveal that they have helped to make Kashmiri an adequate vehicle for the expression of philosophical thought; that there are words in them, derived from Sanskrit may be, but not to be found in any earlier text, and therefore they are new words, that is, new in their use; that words are used in a wider connotation than before; and, what's even more significant, that the Sanskritic form of words is being modified and adapted for modern Kashmiri. For instance : *loh-langar* (iron anchor) for involvement in worldly things; *seki lavar vuthu'ny* (twisting a rope of sand) for a fruitless occupation; *vatanā'sh* (highway robbers) for greed, lust and pride; *sandā'rith pakhu'c* (steadying the wheels) for equipoise; *da'ly trāvu'ny* (spreading the hem of the garment) for surrender and supplication; *dumaṭas rīnzy* (marbles thrown at a huge boulder)

for an ineffective attempt, and many more, not to speak of the energy, the expressiveness, of phrase and metaphor charged with memorable associations. This is so also with the imagery drawn naturally from the familiar surroundings of the countryside : the ferry across the river, the creaky bridges on the causeway, the bloom of a cotton flower, the kailyard, the saffron field, water, snow and ice, the washerman striking clothes on the washing-stone, the mulling of *puttoo* tweed in the big stone mortar with fuller's earth, shepherds and their flock, the sowing and the harvesting; the tawny bullock, etc. etc.

The *vaakh* is mostly a four-line stanza, complete and independent in itself, a sententious gnomic verse. The sense seldom, if ever, runs on to another *vaakh* as it does in one instance.[1] There are, however, several *vaakh* that have a common refrain[2], and a few are put in the form of questions and answers[3]—all these have a close connection with one another. Each line of Lal Ded's *vaakh* completes the sense, it does not overflow into the line that follows[4]; and therefore it has both compactness as well as pointedness, giving it the edge of a proverb. We may not, however, make much of the short stop in the line itself[5]; it is not a caesura, a pause in the middle of the line, as much as a stop to indicate a new turn of the phrase which does impart to the line a mild jerk or twist. We shall be wrong to say that there is any experimentation in respect of either prosody or the length of the line, the number of lines in a *vaakh*, or even the incidence of rhymes. The incidence of rhymes does not seem to be deliberate. They are in the order in which they come, *abab*, *abac*, *abcb*, or no rhyme at all; there is no straining after them.

1. LV, Nos. 102 and 103, See Translations, No. 105.
2. Nos. 11, 30, 69 and 51, 52, 53, 54 (Translations).
3. LV, 14-15, 39-40, 73-76 and 78, 79 and AK, 29. For translations, see Nos. in the Concordance.
4. But see LV, Nos. 6, 30, 33, 47, 80 where the sense does run on into the next line.
5. LV, 17, 30, 76, 80 and AK, 54, 70, 75.

The metre of *Lalla vaakh* is loose, looser than that of *Mahānayaprakāsha* which lends itself to quantitative scansion of Indian prosody. Kashmiri, in Grierson's words[1], does show "a tendency to substitute stress for quantity"; and in "Lalla's verses, four stresses go to each *pada*, or line." The important fact, however, is that the four-line quatrain of the particular length of the line exactly fits the thought; and indeed lends it coherence and compactness.

Grierson sometimes calls these *vāakh* 'songs'.[2] It must be stated that while any verse, and for the matter of that, snatches of prose, can be put to music and sung, that is, turned into a song, the *vaakh* of Lal Ded are not 'song' in the sense that they were meant to be sung like, for instance, *Gurubāni*, the hymns of Guru Nanak, or *bhajans* of Mira or other Bhakta poet-singers. The *vaakh* do not sing, of themselves, so to say, as the popular folk (*chakri*) song or the Kashmiri *vatsan* song with its haunting refrain lends itself to singing. Lal Ded's *vaakh* are usually weighted with thought, subtle and deep, and do not have any musical quality as such. They make you look within and think and reflect, rather than burst into a song. This is, however, not to deny that a *vaakh* here or there does move us with tender emotion.[3]

1. LV, On Lalla's Metres (pp. 144-148), see p. 147 and p. 145.
2. LV, Preface, P. V.
3. LV, 7, 8, 44, 67, 95, 96, 97, 98, 105, 106, 108.

CHAPTER FIVE

LAL DED : HER TIMES AND MILIEU

tvuth kyāh vavyot ta phalihiy sov

What was it you had sown
Which should have borne abundant fruit ?

I HAVE found it difficult to establish any relationship between the *vaakh* of Lal Ded and the age in which she lived, the relationship between literature and society of the kind that would satisfy what we have come to call a 'progressive modern mind', except perhaps in a very general and meaningless way. I have felt that a more profitable line of research would be to discover whatever literary tradition we might, that is, the continuity of it, sometimes obvious, sometimes less obvious, in those remote days and, for the purpose, to study *Mahānayaprakāsha* and even the earlier fragments of quotation which we meet in some Saiva texts and commentaries on them. That would, I hope, not only enrich our understanding of old Kashmiri and its literature but also give us a sense of the continuity of development, a historical perspective, as a whole, of whatever literature we have. If this were done (and it cannot be done here), we could, so to say, place Lal Ded against the background of her times, that aspect of it, those literary and extra-literary events and influences

which help in understanding individual talent and its creative expression.

There are, however, some recent writers, estimable in their way, who do not seem to be satisfied until they discover relationship between not only Lal Ded and the tradition of Kashmiri literature but also, in the more radical and "progressive" way, Lal Ded and the changing political and social conditions of an age which, as it appears to us at this distance of time, was an age of catastrophic change. Therefore they have taken it for granted that Lal Ded must have had social awareness of the kind they would expect of her; she must have been consciously aware of, and affected by, what was happening and also of the socio-economic and political consequences that were being generated by these happenings. From this it is an easy inference to draw that Lal Ded played a part in giving a voice to, and indeed furthering, the changes that were taking place. She brought about a "synthesis of the two philosophies" (the Trika and the Islamic-Sufi) and this synthesis "was given to the world in poetic sermons by the wandering ministrel through the rest of her life."[1] Others go much further. For instance : "Though originally a Hindu, she was greatly infiuenced by Islamic Sufistic thought. . .It is commonly avowed by Muslims in Kashmir that her verses after her contact with Shah Hamadan and other Muslim saints are more expressly reflective of Muslim thought."[2] Dr. R. K. Parmu, whose *A History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir (1320-1818)* is generally well-documented, has this to say without any documentation to support it : "She preached against the existing Hindu social drawbacks and religious superstitions and ignorance. (p. 107). . . She preached against the Saiva religion as it was practised by the Tantric 'gurus' of those times who were master magicians . . . She is the earliest known social and educational reformer of Kashmir . . . [And to cap it all]

1. *Daughters of Vitasta* by Prem Nath Bazaz, p. 129.
2. *Kashīr* by G. M. D. Sufi, pp. 383 and 385.

she preached harmony between Vedantism and Sufism, good Hindu and good Muslim."

We cannot enter into a long discussion on the points raised in the views expressed above; but we may make a protest in regard to them. What exactly is the evidence of "the synthesis" of the Trika and Sufi philosophies ? There is none in the *vaakh* of Lal Ded. If, as Sir Richard Temple[1] says, the gnostic movement of the Sufis was eclectic in the highest degree and not orthodox, being imbued with outside influences, European and Asiatic, and even with Hindu thought; if they tended to identify themselves with God, like the early Hindus. . . and if their practice to this end came very near to the Hindu Yoga—this surely can only mean that (in his own words again) "all this being so Indian, both in thought and practice, that Hindu ascetic leaders of philosophy would readily sympathise with and absorb it." Is this sympathising with, and absorbing of, the "so Indian" thought and practice what we do mean by "synthesis" of religious philosophies ? Sir Richard Temple seems to argue that since "there were, too, among the Nàqshbandīs exercises in the restraint of breath, strongly reminiscent of the yoga exercises of the Hindu Shaivas; since the Naqshbandīs and the Sufis generally taught the doctrine of many lives for one individual soul, and that the soul after death returns to the world in a new body; and God is diffused over all his creatures, and exists everywhere and in everything. . . and since they held it necessary to make profound meditation perpetual and continuous," therefore "although Lalla was a Shaiva Hindu and her turn of thought and feeling was distinctly that of her own religion, yet there is much in them of all this tendency of the Sufis, which is in fact almost Hindu Upanishadic idealism." What should one say of all this except that similarities in doctrine as well as practice have been found between the Sufis of certain orders and the mystics of certain Hindu Schools or

1. RCT, pp. 79-81.

systems ? All this and more that he has written does not add up to much. It tells us that, in spite of man's stupidity and hate, commerce of thought never stopped with the result that different philosophies of different peoples did interact and mutually affect one another. It certainly does not prove either that the teaching of the Sufis was, as he says, "on all fours with that which was taught to her (Lal Ded)"[1]; or that she "quickly and deeply absorbed such a line of thought" from her contact with her "contemporary and friend, the Persian Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani, the Muslim Apostle of Kashmir"[2]; or (what is an extraordinary statement to make) that "Lalleshwari's association with Shah Hamadan was due to an *identity of the faith* of Sufis and Hindu mendicants and saints in Kashmir"[3] (italics mine).

In order to carry weight, and conviction, statements such as these or those that are quoted below must not be based merely on the mutual influence of different philosophies or cultures in a remote past but on definite verifiable facts of life and, as in this instance, on the authentic *vaakh* of Lal Ded herself. None of these opinions have been, or can be, thus supported. The facile statement some of us make that there is an essential oneness in the basic philosophies of all creeds and religions"[4] may be well meant but, unfortunately, it is not the truth. It is true, however, that some well-known mystics, Christian, Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu, have shown a marvellous similarity of certain mystical experiences[5]; and that Sufis have preferred peaceful conversion to coercive methods and, like other non-Muslim mystics, stressed the inner quest. This is something, nay much, but this is neither "identity of faith" nor "essential oneness of creeds and religions." It is not of the gradual fusion of cultures, of dress and diet, art

1. RCT, pp. 5 and 6.
2. RCT, pp. 79-81.
3. PNKB, p. 484.
4. DR, p. 366, lines 5-6.
5. SLK, pp. 56-69.

and architecture, or music (which did take place) that we speak of but of the identity of creeds and religious philosophies, which are not the same thing.

Sir Richard Temple has gone far afield to trace the sources of Lalla's religion but missed the much greater relevance, nearer home, of the doctrine and practice of the Trika in which she was born, bred up and initiated. His 166-page introduction to his *The World of Lalla* bespeaks his wide reading but, in the application of his knowledge thus gained, he does not show a correspondingly adequate discrimination. And he makes mistakes of fact. Zainul-Ābidīn the Great is called "the Iconoclast" (p. 77) while it is his father who has earned this title. He says that "Lalla is said to have been influenced by the great national patron saint of the Kashmiris named Nūrud-Din Wali of Tsrār-i-Sharīf" (p. 3.). As every Kashmiri, Hindu or Muslim, sees it, the truth is the other way round. Besides, Lal Ded should have been sixty, if not more, when Nund Rishi was born. It is also extremely doubtful if she ever met Shah Hamadan[1]; and if she did, it was about thirty Hegira years after she had left her home, already famous for her spiritual attainments and, indeed, miraculous powers. It would hardly be the time to be initiated into new doctrines and practices for spiritual illumination. And, her own *vaakh* belie this.[2] What Temple has written, other writers have repeated without investigation.

It is difficult to take Dr. Sufi seriously. He records "uncritical"[3] opinions without inquiry into their truth. He does not tell us how and in what way the Sufistic thought "greatly influenced" Lalla nor does he give us any other verses she wrote after her contact with Shah Hamadan which are "more expressly reflective of Muslim thought" and which would also corroborate the belief that she had accepted Islam,

1. See *supra* Chapter 1.
2. See *supra* Chapter 3.
3. MH, Preface, p. vii.

though he does quote, in translation, several of her verses of, what he regarded as, her 'pre-contact' period. This opinion may be summarily dismissed with the pronouncement that, even up to date, no such verses have been unearthed. The earliest Persian chronicle that not only mentions Lal Ded but also gives a specimen of her verse is *Tārīkh-i-Kabīr* (1909-10) by Haji Mahī-ud-Dīn Miskīn. He includes ten *vaakh*, all except one of which have also been repeated in *Bībī Lalla Ārifa*[1]; and including this one also, the total number comes to eleven. Six of them occur in *Nūrnāma* as Nund Rishī's *shrukh*[2]; and out of the remaining five verses there are only two which have a reference to, what Dr. Sufi may call, "Muslim thought," namely, to *shāitan* (Satan) in one and, in the other, to *m'arifatuk so'dur* (the sea of gnosis) and to the Arabic phrase, *ana alīm bidhāti-al sadūr* (I am the knower of whatever is in the hearts of people). They are clear interpolations, two more lines added to the quatrain of the *vaakh*. On the principles discussed in chapter two, none of these eleven verses are authentic Lal Ded; and even if they were, they would not prove that Lal Ded had absorbed the essential religious Muslim thought. Besides, we must not forget that while she debunked idol-worship, she also debunked animal sacrifice, pilgrimage to holy places and, indeed, all 'external' observances; and that she stressed the doctrine of Karma and Transmigration.

Of a piece are (a) Dr. Parmu's opinion that she preached "harmony between Vedantism and Sufism[3]; (b) P. N. K. Bamzai's statement that "the order she founded was an admixture of the non-dualistic philosophy of Saivism and Islamic Sufism"[4]; (c) Dr. Kaw's statement that she preached "this composite Saiva-cum-Sufi philosophy"[5]; and (d) also Dr.

1. RPL, 255.
2. NN, Nos., 115, 140, 180, 195, 212, 213.
3. RKP, p. 111.
4. PNKB, p. 498.
5. DR, p. 365, line 27.

Mohibbul Hasan's statement that "the influence of Islam can also be discerned on Advaita Saivism, as represented by the teachings of Lalla Ded".[1] On the authority of Sir Richard Temple, which he evidently accepts as infallible, Dr. Mohibbul Hasan makes several other astounding statements[2] which roundly tell us that whatever is distinctive in Lal Ded she learnt from Sayyid Mir 'Ali, other Sufis and even Nur-ud-Din Rishī. A little effort and inquiry should have convinced him that Saivism does not believe in or recommend withdrawal from the world; nor is "the use of plain words with esoteric meaning" or "Divine Love" unknown to it, nor again is there any bleak formalism in "Saivite beliefs and practices."[3] As regards Dr. Parmu's opinions, it may categorically be stated that she did not preach against Saiva religion but practised it; that there is no reference whatsoever in her authentic *vaakh* against "Tantric gurus"[4], nor to "existing Hindu social drawbacks and religious superstitions", nor again to any social and educational reforms which she, as the "earliest known reformer" introduced in Kashmir. There is no reference in her *vaakh* to any particular obnoxious rites, nor to *sati*, enforced widowhood, and the institution of *devadāsi*. And in what way was she an educational reformer ? Did she introduce mother-tongue as the medium of instruction, change the syllabus or what ? Indeed Dr. Parmu seems to believe that it was Lal Ded who prepared the way for Sayyid Mir 'Ali Hamadani. He had only to put the label on what she had said and done and it was Islam.[5] Nor did Lal Ded found any Order (*tarīqa*) of Sufis or sect or cult of Hindus.[6] Lal Ded was not "a wandering *minstrel*" (italics mine), and her

1. MH, p. 238.
2. MH, p. 239, para 1.
3. MH, p. 239.
4. LV, 10 where Lal Ded does not disapprove of Kaulacār puja.
5. RKP, p. 111, lines 22-23.
6. PNKB, p. 492.

vaakh are not a "sermon,"[1] poetic or non-poetic; they are an intensely felt experience, "the very outgoings of the soule"; and even her observations addressed apparently to a second person are really "internal conversations" and her "self-dialogistic manner,"[2] the result of watching her own mind and examining her own moods.

Confusion in this respect has, I concede, been created amongst us by the uncritical addition to her *vaakh* from time to time. I have already discussed this in Chapter two. Here I may quote a passage which will throw light on what I have been saying : "Let me begin at once with my father's oft-repeated remark that the real and genuine Sayings of Lalla are only the sixty found in Bhaskar Razdan's collection. Whatever additions, either published or unpublished, are to be accepted with a pinch of salt. This was his belief and keeping it in mind he tried to sift all evidence and from his huge collection selected only 75. These also he published in parts, actually three, in *The Indian Antiquary*. The first bunch of thirty-three were from a collection he had secured from a person in Hāngalgond. The rest were taken out of different collections made by him at different times and from different places."[3] To this class also belong the sayings ascribed to Lal Ded in Rev. H. Knowles's Dictionary.[4]

An attempt has been made above to clear certain cobwebs that have spread around Lal Ded and to rescue her from the admirers who admire her, partly or wholly, for wrong reasons.

1. DV, p. 129.
2. SLK, p. 49.
3. From a letter dated New Delhi, September 5, 1971, of Sri P. N. K. Bamzai, author of *A History of Kashmir* (Metropolitan, 1962). The Hāngalgond batch, one may presume, would contain many *vaakh* of Mirza Kāk, who lived there about 150 years ago.
4. KN, Proverbs Nos. 46 & 56 have been indisputably found to be the work of Aziz Khan, poet of Miskīn Bāgh; No. 150, the work of Nund Rishi (NN, p. 19 and No. 137). Remarks to this effect by Anand Kaul are also to be found on the margin of his copy of *Lallā-Vākyāni* of Grierson (*vide*, the letter quoted above).

I may now reinforce what I have said by briefly describing the milieu in which she lived and which may be presumed in some way to have affected her. The fourteenth century was a period of storm and stress in Kashmir, a period indeed of epoch-making revolutionary political and socio-religious change. The decline of Hindu rule which can definitely be traced from the death of Queen Didda (A. D. 981-1003), and even earlier from the death of King Avantivarman (A. D. 855-883) of Utpala Dynasty, was precipitating towards a fall which came in the very first quarter of the fourteenth century. During the preceding centuries, throughout the tenth to the founding of the Muslim Sultanate by Shah Mir (Shams-ud-din) in A. D. 1339, we find, in Spengler's phrase, "all the typical stigmata of decay." Kings rose and fell in quick succession; the court was continually racked by intrigue and assassinations and the country by internecine feuds; the feudal lords, the Damaras and Lavanyas, addicted to arson and pillage, rose in revolt at the least provocation; there were numerous instances of kings and queens morbidly sensuous, cruel and oppressive; the Kāyastha bureaucracy, corrupt and influential, opposed strong measures to suppress maladministration; even the Brahmins undertook *prayopavesana* (hunger strikes) against several kings for their selfish caste interests; and some Hindu kings "more wicked than sin,"[1] pillaged and plundered the temples and *maṭh-s* (monasteries), and set fire to them, seizing and melting the gold and silver images of gods and goddesses. As a result of this people suffered greatly from the resultant anarchical conditions, heavy burden of taxation, rapacity of the feudal landlords and continual raids into the Valley by chieftains of the surrounding areas.

The fourteenth century began with conditions no better than before during the reign of the weak-minded Sahadeva (A. D. 1301-20). When Dulchu, perhaps a Tarkar chief from Central Asia, invaded the land, Sahadeva fled the country.

1. Raj., VIII. 1331-32.

During his eight-month stay in the Valley as the king, "the Rākshasa Dulchu" impoverished the Valley which "became almost like a region before the creation, a vast field with men without food and full of grass."[1] Then followed another period of intrigue and revolt through the succeeding reigns of Rinchin (A. D. 1320-23), Udyānadeva (1323-38) and Kota Rānī (1338-39), till Shāh Mīr (1339-42) ascended the throne and, in Jonaraja's words, "the troubles of Kashmir were assuaged and her condition changed for better".[2]

These events, particularly the invasion and consequent devastation wrought by Dulchu, find no echo in Lal Ded's *vaakh*. Whatever observations she is supposed to have made in her *vaahh* relate to a learned man dying of hunger[3], to wicked gurus and Brahmins[4], to some husbands wives being a source of comfort and to some of danger like bitches at the door ready to bite one[5] and, more pertinently,to the bad times ahead for the young, when mothers and daughters together would spend the day with strangers.[6] Apart from the fact that none except possibly the first are authentic, there is nothing in these references which may be considered especially typical of the times. Nor do other events and happenings of the reigns of Sultans Alau-ud-Din(1343-45), Shihab-ud-Din(1354-73), Qutb-ud-Din(1373-89) and Sikandar (1389-1413), find any direct or indirect reference in her *vaakh*. Very probably, she was either not born or was very young about the time of Dulchu's tyranny, and had already passed away by the time Sultan Sikandar ascended the throne, during whose reign most of the famous temples were desecrated and persecution of the Hindus began. Moreover, but for these two events, a country girl would very likely not know nor care to know what was going

1. DRAJ, verse 162. Also see p. 69.
2. DRAJ.
3. LV, 83.
4. AK, 17, 21 and WC, 69.
5. KN, No. 102.
6. LV, 91, 92.

on in the Palace or at the Court. And as Sir Aurel Stein[1] says, "Islam made its way not by forcible conquest but by gradual conversion"; and the Muslim Sultanate itself came into being as the result of a palace *coup de etat*.[2] Moreover, while it may be regarded as true that by the beginning of the century, there were a few Muslim settlements in the Valley and in the city of Srinagar, it must not be wrongly concluded that Muslims formed anything more than a well-knit tiny minority.[3] Speaking of the reign of Qutb-ud-Din (1373-89), Malik Haider, the author of *Tārīkh-i-Kashmir* (A. H. 1027/A. D. 1617-18), says : "In that age the majority of the people of this land were kāfir, Hindus *(aksar īn diyār kāfir budand).*" It was after Mir Muhammad Hamadani came to Kashmir in 1394 with 300 sayyids and stayed here for 22 years that the State and the Church joined hands and embarked on a vigorous proselytizing policy and persecution of Brahmins and other obdurate Hindus. There was, therefore, no polarisation of forces, old and new, Hindu and Muslim, during the lifetime of Lal Ded. Indeed the Sultan, in the words of Malik Haider, "had not a thing about him except the name *(ghair az nam-i Islām);* even the style of their dress was like that of the *Kuffār* (the Hindus)." It was Sayyid Mir Ali Hamadani who, fleeing from Timur's wrath against the Sayyids, had earlier come to the Valley with 700 sayyids, and forbidden the wearing of the Hindu-style dress, converted 37,000 Hindus, and become the architect of Islam *(bāni-e Islām)*.[4] It was he who had started the process not only of vigorous proselytization but of Persianization.[5]

The brief historical survey of the times in which Lal Ded lived leads us to the conclusion that though they witnessed a

1. Stein, Vol. I, p. 130.
2. PNKB, p. 422.
3. PNKB, p. 484, ll. 17-20; RKP, p. 104, ll. 17-18 and p. 56, ll. 15-18; and MH, p. 235.
4. PNKB, p. 483.
5. RKP, p. 111, footnote 87 about his *Zakhīrat-ul-Mulūk*.

more perceptible encroachment, if not an incursion, of an alien religious civilisation and government than before, yet till about the last decade or so, there was little or no coercion or violence associated with it; and there was no confrontation, no direct collision, between the old tradition and the new challenge.[1] Islam seems to have spread fairly rapidly but it did not, and indeed could not, in these very early years of the Muslim rule, strike deep roots and completely transform the entire body of mystical tradition and other popular religious beliefs or supplant religious and other observances which the people had inherited from the ancient times.[2] This must especially have been the case in the conservative countryside which was really where Lal Ded roamed among the people, a very large majority of whom were still Hindu. Even when, perhaps soon after, they became Muslim, they would not forget nor discard what she had said and stood for, as expressed in her *vaakh*, which did not seem to conflict with the teaching of the Sufis. Moreover, these neo-converts would take quite sometime to be the model Muslims of Sharī'a. We may also remember that while Sufis greatly helped to spread the message of Islam and to convert people they did, at the same time, make certain compromises with their original beliefs and ways of life.[3] This is not to deny that the Sufis and the people about them, including the Brahmin elite, might have met and compared the similarities of Sufi *haqiqa* (mystic truth) with their own *rahasya upāsana* (esoteric discipline), but there was, just yet, no encounter of the intensity to make one sit up and think and learn about the new challenge and work out, if possible, a "synthesis" or a deeper understanding of the new faith, its doctrine and practice. During the long period of encounter, there has, up to date, been hardly any study, in a

1. Stein, vol. I. pp. 130-132. PNKB, pp. 422-424.
2. MH, pp. 233, 239 and 273.
3. *Islam*, Fazlur Rahman (a Doubleday Anchor Book, A. 641) pp. 171 onwards.

spirit of reverence or scholarship, of Islam by Hindus or of Hinduism by Muslims. There has had inevitably to be a response on the part of Hinduism (submission, resistance, or adjustment) to the challange of Islam, but it had to take about 300 years to develop a spirit of religious rapprochement or "Assimilation on Trial".[1] It is tempting to make Lal Ded the symbol of our response, but the temptation has to be resisted.

Lal Ded was a Saiva, but she had the Hindu catholicity of creed, and it mattered little by what name God was called. It may be He or He or He *(su va su va su va su)*, Siva or Vishnu, Brahma or Buddha. And if she encountered Muslims, she (the person she was) would not discriminate between Hindus and Muslims or others. Buddhism which was held in high honour up to the last days of Hindu rule, still survived; and Hindus continued to worship, besides Siva, Vishnu and Shakti under various names,[2] many minor gods and goddesses of the early Kashmirian pantheon like Ganesha and Surya; and even the Naga cult continued to prevail.[3] What gives distinction to religious creative genius of the people is, beyond doubt, the Trika or, as it is known now, Kashmir Saivism which in its present philosophical and ethical form, began about the beginning of the ninth century with Vasugupta'a *Sivasūtra*-s. Its distinction notwithstanding, the *Saiva Sampradāya* remained only a cult, "confined to a particular class of learned and religious-minded people only."[4] It did not generate a reformation or an all-round renaissance as it should have done if it had been brought to the people, irrespective of caste, and given the strong impulse of a new religious movement. It is necessary to remember this in order

1. Romila Thapar : *A History of India* (Pelican), Chapter 13, pp. 303-315.
2. Durgā in Her various forms of Shārikā, Rajnā, Shāradā, Jwālā, Kālī, Varāhī, also Lakshmī and Saraswatī.
3. SCR, p. 158.
4. SCR, p. 174.

to understand why Hindu decadence, despite this new philosophy, was not delayed, if not altogether halted. It will also help us to assess the significance of Lal Ded's contribution to the religious thought of her times. I must, however, controvert Sir Richard Temple's statement that "it was during a tour of his, among the Shaivas, already well in force in Kashmir, that Shankarācārya's teaching attained that influence which is reflected in the *Lalla-vākyāni*. After that, the Shaiva doctors there began to teach monistic *(advaita)* in place of their orthodox dualist *(dvaita)* doctrines."[1] That the great advaita *ācarya* toured Kashmir is not proved. Kalhana, who does mention poets and learned men like Asvagosha, Nāgarjuna, Bhavabhūti and Vakpatrirāja[2], who came to Kashmir from outside, does not make any mention of the great philosopher and his debates, if any, with the Saivas here. There are good reasons to doubt if the Trika has been influenced by Shankara Vedanta. Indeed, neither Somananda nor Utpaladeva mention anything about it; and even Abhinavagupta (10th century), who criticises in detail the Vedantic theory of Avidya, does not mention the name of Gaudapada or Shankara. It can be asserted without fear of contradiction that there is no trace of any influence of Shankara Vedanta in the works of these authors. The authors of Saiva philosophy draw their inspiration from Saiva tradition and the *āgama*-s and not from the Vedic texts; the philosophy itself is non-Vedic in character; its technique, terminology, and language indicate no connection with Vedanta. The two are different in outlook and in practice; and the advaita of the Trika is different from the advaita of Vedanta. However that be, one thing is certain : *there is no evidence whatever* that Shankara's teaching is reflected in *Lalla Vākyāni*.

Grierson notes Lal Ded's fondness[3] for the expression

1. RCT, p. 69.
2. Raj., I. 173 and PNKB, p. 117.
3. LV, p. 201. The line is used as a refrain in LV, Nos. 11, 30, 69.

shūnyas shūnyah mīlith gav (shūnya became merged in *shūnya)* and her frequent use[1] of the word *sahaz*; but neither he nor any of the writers mentioned above seem to suggest any unusual significance in the use of these expressions. In his perceptive essay, *Mother Lal of Kashmir*[2], Shankar Lal Kaul does see in them an influence, respectively, of Mahāyana Buddhism and Nātha cult of Sahaja saints. That Kashmir became an important centre of Buddhist learning, in particular of the Mahayana school, is an established fact.[3] Kalhana mentions the visit of Nagarjuna during the reign of the Kushans. He lived at Saḍarhadvana, the present Hārwan.[4] It is very probable that Saivism, as it existed in those early centuries, and Mahayana Buddhism influenced each other. Indeed, Nagarjuna's "*shūnya* goes to *shunya*"[5] is but a present indefinite form of Lal Ded's line given above which is put in the past tense. Nagarjuna makes a statement of universal import while Lal Ded speaks of or recalls the fact of her own experience. We must, however, clearly understand that, whatever the earlier mutual influences, *shūnya* is not used in the Trika or by Lal Ded in quite the same sense in which Nagarjuna uses it. In the Trika there are, so to say, two *shunya*-s, viz., *Sivashunya*[6], the Akshara, Immutable, Transcendent, the featureless Brahman of Vedanta, *(Sivākhyam shūnyadhām tat)* as well as *shunyapramāta*, that is, the *jiva* at the state where flux and turbulence of objective activities produced by means of *indriya*-s and *antahkarana* cease, and there is stillness. It is this *shūnyapramāta* that merges in *Sivashunya*, as Lal Ded puts it in her *vaakh* referred to above.[7]

1. LV, p. 202, ll. 2-4 from the bottom.
2. SLK, pp. 67-69.
3. PNKB, Chap. 4, pp. 85, 86, 87.
4. Raj., I. 173, SCR, p. 160.
5. SLK, p. 67.
6. *Vijnāna Bhairava*, KSTS, No. 24, pp. 110-111.
7. Also see *Mahānaya Prakāsha*, KSTS, No. XXI, verse 2. "*shunya*" explained as "*shuddha-cidrūpam na tu abhāvasvabhāvam*" (of the form of pure Mind, not non-existent).

As regards Lal Ded's use of the word *sahaz*, we may, likewise concede that it may be an echo of the word used by the earlier Nātha Sampradāya whose influence was felt in the north of India and, which was later taken up by other *sants* (saints) like Guru Nānak. Like Lal Ded, he also frequently speaks of *sahaz* (Punjābī Hindi *sahaj*) and *Ik Omkar*; and we may presume an earlier common tradition. We have, however, to remember, firstly, that the semi-legendary founder of the Nātha Sampradāya (tradition, sect), Matsyendra Nātha, popularly known in Kashmir as Macchanda, is regarded as an avatār of the Kula or Saiva *(kulaprakrayā-avatārakam)*[1] and, secondly, that *sahaz* (Sans. *sahaja*) in the Trika is that knowledge which shines by itself, by its own lustre, which is the very nature of the Self.[2] The concept of *sahaz* was therefore nothing alien or even borrowed from any foreign source but a concept of the Trika itself. The second chapter of *Siva Sūtra Vārttikā* itself is entitled *Sahajavidyodaya*.

1. Abhinavagupta in the Commentary on *Tantraloka*, Vol. I, page 24, quoting from *āgama*.
2. *svaprakāshātmikā vidyā sahaja : Sivasūtra Vārttikā*, Bhatta Bhāskara, Sūtra III. 7, p. 50, KSTS, Vol. IV.

CHAPTER SIX

LAL DED : A REAPPRAISAL

te'li Lal nāv drām . . .

Then my fame as Lalla spread afar.

A REAPPRAISAL of Lal Ded has become necessary. I have endeavoured to determine certain probabilities regarding the dates of her birth and death, and pointed out the improbability of some of the anecdotes and legends that have cluttered the meagre material of her life story. I have also tried to examine the authenticity of her *vaakh* and to identify and isolate the spurious among them, again with a good measure of probability perhaps but not certainty. I have subjected to scrutiny some of the well-meaning but inexact, even incorrect, laudatory things said about her; for it is time we stopped building her image on such facile opinions.

After clearing all this out of the way, we may well ask : what then has been the significance of Lal Ded ? Her role as the maker of Kashmiri, both language and literature, has been discussed in chapter four. We may here say that though Kashmiri has had a much longer history, and Kalhana records for us what is said to be "the earliest specimen" of Kashmiri[1],

1. *Rangassa Helu dinna* (Cakravarman during his second spell of reign,

yet we can for good reasons acclaim Lal Ded as the progenitor of modern Kashmiri. She is the first among the moderns not only chronologically but in the modern quality of interrogation and expostulation in her poetry. Her poetry is modern because it comes alive for us even today. Indeed, she helped us, Kashmiris, to discover our mother-tongue and our soul as a people. Henceforth Kashmiri might not have the patronage of kings and feudal lords; it might be overshadowed by Persian which became the language of government and of the elite; but it could not be suppressed, for it had the patronage of the people who, now onwards, used it to give expression to their deepest thoughts and feelings. That is why there is not a Kashmiri, Hindu or Musalman, who has not some of her *vaakh* on the tip of his tongue, and who does not reverence her memory.[1] Before her, Kashmiri verse was written for mnemonic use, as an aid to memorising esoteric doctrine; but in Lal Ded's *vaakh* it is used to express aspiration and experience, thought and feeling. She opened new channels of communication between the elite and the common people and, what is more, between the common people themselves. Her importance is, however, not only historical. Intrinsically, she remains pre-eminent among our poets up to this day, and a maker of Kashmiri as only a poet with an extraordinary force of originality can be, a poet whose 'poesy', in Sir Richard Temple's words, is aflame

> With the red fire of a thought that burns.

Lal Ded's *vaakh* are, besides, in Grierson's shrewd observation, "an account, often in vivid and picturesque language, of the actual working out in practice of a religion previously worked out in theory. As such, it is a unique contribution

A. D. 936-37, ordered that the village *Helu be given to Ranga*) Raj., V. 397-98.

1. LV, p. 1.

to the body of evidence that must necessarily form the basis of a future history of one of the most important religious systems of India".[1] Herein lies its distinction as a spiritual document or testament, if you will, of immense *practical* value to the spiritual seeker; and also, simultaneously of poetry which, in the words of Maulvi Rūm[2], is endowed

> With vision which increases the power of speech;
> With inspired speech which makes vision penetrating;

and which opens the casements of our soul on to the spirit's "unhorizoned measureless sights."

Above all, Lal Ded is that rare and remarkable phenomenon, a saint *par excellence*, who, in her own lifetime, attained to the way of the Supreme, *paramagath*, and entered the Abode of Light, *prakāshasthān* of God. She became a *jīvanmukta* for whom life lost its meaninglessness and death its terror. She had loved God with a passionate and one-pointed longing, and found Him in her ownself *(ghaṭi ro'ṭum)*. It is in this sense that she was, what our chroniclers have called her, *a majdhuba*, one whom God had drawn to Himself, and not in the sense of an ill-balanced person, physically in a trance-like condition. She was, as *Asrār-ul-Abrār* puts it, a *majnūni 'āqila*, immersed in the love of God but wise and sage, with her wits about her, *daksha* (expert), as the *Gita*[3] puts it. Her *vaakh* are remarkable for clarity and coherence, depth of thought and cerebration or "brain work." She did not give people a religion made easy; she is not what we may call, a "low-brow saint-poet". She is last of the ancients rather than the first of the medieval saints. Her *vaakh* are more like the Upanishads, aphoristic, even cryptic at times, embodying rare spiritual experiences, rather than like the devotional songs of the medieval "saint-

1. LV, Preface, vi,
2. Mathnawi, Nicholson's translation, edited by Professor Arberry.
3. XII. 16,

singers," as Dr. V. Raghavan[1] calls them. Lal Ded's contribution is to the corpus of spiritual experience and insight rather than to that of the poetry of bhakti.[2] With these important reservations, we may call her a harbinger of the Medieval Hindu Reformers but not "an off-shoot of the Reformation Movement," as Dr. R. K. Parmu[3] calls her. "She is, as a modern psychologist would put it, of the cerebrotonic type. Even Muktabai, the famous thirteenth century Marhatta poetess, is not as austerely super-sensuous. . . She is a contrast in this respect to brides of Krishna, like the South Indian Alwar saint Andal and the Rajputana Princess Mira, and to brides of Christ, like St. Gertrude and Marguerite Marie Alacoque. . . She is perhaps, if we may say so, the most manly of all women seekers after God."[4] Our chroniclers have consistently called her "Rābi'a sānia," a second Rābia (*d.* A. D. 801) who was satisfied with nothing God could give short of Himself. Comparisons should not be taken too far; and if we would compare, she is, in respect of austere thought and direct Path like Ramana Maharishī; in respect of pervasive popularity among the people and miracles and legends about her life, like Sri Sāi Bābā; and in respect of her iconoclasm and revolt against social discriminination and dead forms of ritual and convention, like Vemana.[5] She lived the truth she found for herself and made no compromise with convention or custom. That is why her influence has been durable and widespread though she did not found any sect or cult while that of her predecessors, the great Saiva philosophers and preceptors, remained circumscribed within a small cult.

Lal Ded is a class apart : she has seen. "I have *seen* the Lord" *(vuchum Pandit)*;" I have *seen* Siva and Shakti sealed in One *(vuchum Siva-ta-Shaku'th mīlith)*; "I have *seen* the universe

1 & 2. as he says in *The Great Integrators* (Publications Division), p. 27.
3. RKP, p. 107.
4. SLK, pp. 49-51.
5. Her younger contemporary of Guntur in the present Andhra Pradesh.

pervaded by Siva" *(Sivamay tsarātsar zag pashyā)*. Lal Ded is undoubtedly among the greatest spiritual geniuses of the world. The mere existence of such a seer is a beneficence and a blessing *(a rahmat)*. She irradiated an influence, impalpable but deep, which had a transforming power, of engendering purity and goodness and (above all distinctions of low-born and high-born, *kufr* and *dīn*) human brotherliness. These values permeated society and found a response among the people irrespective of caste and creed, strengthened their faith in them and kept it steadfast, whatever vicissitudes the times then or later brought in their train. Her *vaakh* were accepted as initiation, long after she was no more; and legends spread how she had initiated Sheikh Alī[1], the brother of Makhdūm Sheikh Hamza and, four centuries later, explained her own *vaakh* to Mirza Kāk of Hāngalgond and his disciples.[2] There is no doubt that, as time passed, her fame spread, for men of understanding and practical spiritual quest regarded her above the differences and disputes of religion. Her *vaakh* and their spirit caught on among the less sophisticated people of the countryside; and their message was taken up by the like-minded popular Rishīs who, as *Āīni Akbarī* affirms, "although they do not suffer themselves to be fettered by traditions, are doubtless true worshippers of God. They revile not any other sect", thus establishing a tradition of harmony and tolerance which is our priceless heritage. It is this which we owe largely to Lal Ded and which makes of her a beneficence for us. Our poets and mystics have borne testimony to this throughout the centuries. Her younger contemporary, Sheikh Nūrud-dīn Rishī, says of her:

> That Lalla of Padmānpor — she drank
> Her fill of divine nectar;
> She was indeed an *avatār* of ours.
> O God, grant me the self-same boon !

1. BBL, 255.
2. AK, p. 17.

Rūpa Bhawāni (1625-1721) regarded her as a supreme guru :

Lal mān Lal paramagwaram

Paramanand (1791-1879) :

Unique in her yoga of *dwādashānta manḍala*,
Realising *anāhata, nāda-bindu* and *OM*,
Lalleshwari attained to the Supreme Ānanda.

and Shams Faqīr (1843-1904) :

Lalla merged her *prāna* in the Transcendent;
For while ostensibly she went to bathe
At the sacred shrine of Shurāhyār Ghāṭ,
With a leap and a bound she jumped across
To where there is none other than God.

Lal Ded was, in truth, one of those rare God's Elect whom Utpaladeva, in the very beginning of his *Sivastotrāvalī*, salutes thus :

Salutations to that bhakta who, endowed
with devotion to God and His grace,
Without the aid of *dhyāna* and *japa* or
any formula, rule or rite,
Sees the Light of Siva, effortlessly, spontaneously.[1]

1. *evameva sivābhāsastam namo bhaktishālinam.* And this is the acme of Shāmbhavopāya, the path of constant awareness, see Translations 130-138, and PR, pp. 18-21, 82-84.

Rose [illegible] (1[illegible]–1971) recorded her [illegible] story [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] (1[illegible]-1839);

[illegible]

and [illegible] (1[illegible]–1924):

[illegible]

[illegible] in the beginning of the [illegible]

this:

[illegible]

Without the aid of [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

1 [illegible] And this is the sense of [illegible] the [illegible] see Translations [illegible], and [illegible], pp. 19-21, 42-54.

TRANSLATIONS

1. *āmi pana so'dras nāvi chas lamān*

With a rope of loose-spun thread am I towing
  my boat upon the sea.
Would that God heard my prayer
  and brought me safe across !
Like water in cups of unbaked clay
  I run to waste.
Would God I were to reach my home !

2. *la'lith la'lith vaday bo dā'y*

I will weep and weep for you, my Soul;
The world hath caught you in its spell.
Though you cling to them with the anchor of steel,
Not even the shadow of the things you love
Will go with you when you are dead.
Why then have you forgot your own true Self ?

3. *tala chuy zyus ta pyaṭha chukh natsān*

There is a yawning pit underneath you,
  and you are dancing overhead.

Pray, Sir, how can you bring yourself to dance ?
See, the riches you are amassing here,
  nothing of them will go with you.
Pray, Sir, how can you relish your food and drink ?

4. *hacivi hā'rinji pyatsuv kān gom*

A wooden bow and rush grass for an arrow;
A carpenter unskilled and a palace to build;
A shop unlocked in a busy bazaar;
A body uncleansed by waters holy—
Oh dear ! who knows what hath befallen me ?

5. *āyas vate gayas na vate*

By the highway I came,
But by the highway I return not.
And so I find me still on the embankment,
  not having gone even half the way,
And the day is done, the light has failed.
I search my pockets but not a cowrie find :
What shall I pay for the ferry fee ?

6. *kyāh kara pāntsan dahan ta kāhan*

Ah me ! the Five (*Bhuta*-s), the Ten (*Indriya*-s),
And the Eleventh, their lord the mind,
  scraped this pot[1] and went away.
Had all together pulled on the rope,
Why should the Eleven have lost the cow ?
(Why should the soul have gone astray ?)

1. This me, this *ghata* (in Trika Saiva terminology, the individual person, his living body.)

7. *atshyan*[1] *āy ta gatshun gatshe*

For ever we come, for ever we go;
For ever, day and night, we are on the move.
Whence we come, thither we go,
For ever in a round of birth and death,
From nothingness to nothingness.
But sure, a mystery here abides,
A Something is there for us to know.
(It cannot all be meaningless).

8. *āyas kami dishi ta kami vate*

Whence I have come and by which way,
I do not know.
Whither I shall go and by which way,
I do not know.
Were I to know the end of it all
And gain the knowledge of the truth,
(it would be well, for otherwise)
Life here is but an empty breath.

9. *gāṭulah akh vuchum bwachi sū'ty marān*

I have seen a learned man die of hunger,
A sere leaf drop in winter wind;
I have seen an utter fool beat his cook
(who could not make a toothsome dish).
Since then I, Lalla, anxiously await
The day when the lure of the world will fall away.

10. *da'mī ḍīṭhu'm nad vahavu'nī*

Now I saw a stream flowing;

1. Var., *atshān āy* (Bhāskara) : We have become emaciated with age and have to depart. Nothing endures.

Now neither bank nor bridge was seen.
Now I saw a bush in bloom;
Now neither rose nor thorn was seen.

11. *da'mī ḍīṭhu'm ga'j dazu'vu'nī*

Now I saw the hearth ablaze,
Now I saw not fire nor smoke.
Now I saw the Pāndava Mother,
Now she was but a potters' aunt.

12. *tsāmar cha'tu'r rath simhāsan*

A royal fly-whisk, sunshade, chariot and throne,
Merry revels, pleasures of the theatre, a bed
 of cotton down—
Which of these, you think, will go with you
 when you are dead ?
How then can you dispel the fear of death ?

13. *kyāh bo'ḍukh muha bhava-so'dri dare*

Why have you sunk deep in the sea
 of the illusory pleasures of the world ?
Why have you pulled down the high-banked road
 which could have led you safe across ?
The dense darkness of *tamas* surrounds you now,
 and, at the appointed time,
Yama's apparitors prepare to drag
 your body bleeding to death.
Who can dispel your fear of death ?

14. *hā tsittā*[1] *kava chuy lo'gmut parmas*[2]

Why do you dote upon someone, my Soul,
who is not your true love ?
Why have you taken the false for the true ?
Why can't you understand, why can't you know ?
It is ignorance that binds you to the false,
To the ever-recurring wheel of birth and death,
this coming and going.

15. *hā manshi kyāzi chukh vuṭhān se'ki lavar*

O man, why do you twist a rope of sand ?
You cannot tow your boat with it.
What God has written "in karma's line"[3]
Cannot be altered or reversed.

16. *tsarman tsa'ṭith ditith pa'ny pānas*

What was it you had sown which should have borne
a rich harvest ?
You had but tanned a carcass hide,
shaped and stretched it taut on pegs,
(Your only care your own body
which you pegged to the bonds of desire).
But counsel to a fool is labour lost,
Like a ball thrown at a big-sized pillar,
rebounding but not hitting the mark;

1. & 2. lit., *citta,* individual consciousness, the self, drunk with wine offered by another, not produced or bought by oneself. Fig., used for a man infatuated with someone other than his wife or his true love; here the unreal, not the true Self.

3. 'Karma' is the word in the original. God decrees reward or punishment not arbitrarily as one's 'fate', but according to one's karma. Ceremonial rites, pujas and yajnas and the like are 'a rope of sand' and will not avail to change what God has decreed; for man must take the consequence of his karma.

Or fruitless as feeding a tawny bullock
on sweet molasses,
And expect a yield of milk from him.

17. *niyam karyoth garbā*

In your mother's womb you vowed
not to be born again.[1]
When will you recall the vow ?

And die, even while alive (to all desire,
and be released from birth and death)[2] ;
Great honour will be yours in this life,
and greater honour after death.

18. *muḍas gyānu'c kath no va'ny-ze*

Impart not esoteric truth to fools,
Nor on molasses feed an ass.
Do not sow seed in sandy beds,
Nor waste your oil on cakes of bran.

19. *da'chnis o'bras zāyun zānahā*

I might disperse the southern clouds,
I might drain out the sea,
I might cure the incurable sick,
But I cannot convince a fool.[3]

1. A common belief that a child resolves thus in his mother's womb.
2. cf., The *Gita*, V. 23.
3. In this and other *vaakhs*, Lal Ded is remonstrating with herself, her foolish mind, rather than admonishing others.

20. *ṭyoṭh mo'dur tay myūṭh zahar*

What is bitter at first is sweet in the end,
What is sweet at first is poison in the end.[1]
(To everyone is given the choice)
It all depends on the effort put in,
    and the unflagging determined will;
For whoever strives must soon arrive
    at the city of his choice.

21. *gwaran vo'n-nam kunuy vatsum*

My Guru gave me but one precept :
"From without withdraw your gaze within
And fix it on the Inmost Self."
Taking to heart this one precept,
Naked I began to roam.[2]

22. *rājas bā'j ye'my kartal pā'j*

He who wields the sword a kingdom gains;
Paradise is gained by penance and alms.
Follow the Guru's word and gain
True knowledge of the Self within.
Of his own virtue and his sin
Man himself surely reaps the fruits.

23. *nāba'dy bāras aṭagand ḍyo'l gom*

The sling of my candy load has gone loose,
    (and it galls my back);

1. cf., The *Gita*, XVIII. 37-38.
2. *natsun, pherun*, to wander, roam (see *supra*, p. 12). cf. LV, 94, to dance.

My body has bent double under its weight[1];
how shall I carry the load ?
The word of my Guru (that I must lose
the world to gain my soul),
Has been a painful "loss-blister"[2] for me.
I am become a shepherdless flock, ah me !

24. *gwaras pritshām sāsi laṭe*

A thousand times my Guru I asked :
'How shall the Nameless be defined ?'
I asked and asked but all in vain.
The Nameless Unknown, it seems to me,
Is the source of the something[3] that we see.

25. *zanam prā'vith vyabhav no tsonḍum*

In life I sought neither wealth nor power,
Nor ran after the pleasures of sense.
Moderate in food and drink, I lived a controlled life,
Patiently bore my lot, my pain and poverty,
And loved my God.

26. *āyas ti syo'duy gatsha ti syo'duy*

I came straight,
And straight I shall return.
How can the crooked lead me astray ?
Surely, no harm can come to me :
He knows me from the beginning of time,
And loves me.

1. LV, 108. Var., My day's work has gone awry.
2. The loss has been painful, as a blister.
3. This creation, universe.

27. *khyana khyan karān kun no vātak*

By pandering to your appetites,
you get nowhere;
By penance and fasting,
you get conceit.
Be moderate in food and drink
and live a moderate life,
The gates of Heaven will surely be
thrown open wide for you.

28. *tsālun chu vuzmala ta traṭay*

Patience to endure lightning and thunder,
Patience to face darkness at noon,
Patience to go through a grinding-mill—
Be patient whatever befalls, doubting not
that He will surely come to you.[1]

29. *tsala tsittā vwandas bayi mo bar*

Have no fear, O restless mind,
The Eternal One takes thought for you.
He knows how to fulfil your wants.
Then cry to Him alone for help,
His Name will lead you safe across.

30. *khyath ga'nḍith shami nā mānas*

The joys of palate and fine apparel
bring man no lasting peace.
They who give up false hopes and don't
put trust in the things of the world,

1. Var., He will provide for all your wants.

Ascend, unafraid of Death's terrors
by scriptures told;
For having lived contented lives,
they are not debtors of Desire.[1]

31. *kandyav karak kandi kande*

O embodied One, dote not upon your body thus,
embellishing it, adorning it,
providing luxuries for it.
Even its ashes will not endure.

32. *swamana gārun manz yath kande*

Should you, in this very body, seek
The Supreme Self that dwells within,
Greed and illusion soon removed,
A halo of glory will surround
this very body of yours.

33. *yava tū'r tsalī tim ambar he'tā*

This counsel to the body give, O Soul[2]:
Wear only such clothes as ward off cold;
Eat only to satisfy your hunger;
Devote yourself with all your heart
to the knowledge of the Supreme Self.

34. *treshi bwachi mo kreshināvun*

Let not your body suffer
from hunger and thirst,

1. And do not have to settle accounts with the cruel debt-collector Death.
2. LVRB : *tsitta dehas vān kyā van.* cf. Var. LV, 28 : *tsentan yih deh van-kāvan,* consider this body meat for jungle crows.

Feed it whenever it feels famished.
Fie on your fasts and religious rites ;
Do good : therein your duty lies.

35. *atha ma bā trāvun khar bā*

Do not let loose your donkey[1] lest
he damage others' saffron fields;
For none will bare his back to suffer
sword cuts and blows for you.[2]

36. *ye'my lūb manmath mad tsūr morun*

Who slays the highway robbers three,
Greed, Lust and Pride,
And yet, in utter humility, serves
his fellow-men—
He truly seeks out the Lord,
disregarding as worthless ashes
all other things.

37. *mārukh mārabūth kām krūd lūb*

Slay the murderous demons,
Lust, Anger and Greed;
Or, aiming their arrows at you, they will
surely shoot you dead.
Take care, feed them on self-restraint
and discrimination of the Self ;
Thus starved, these demons will become
powerless and weak.

1. Your mind.
2. Punishment for the damage done.

38. *gāl ga'nḍy-nyam bol pa'ḍy-nyam*

They may abuse me or jeer at me,
They may say what pleases them,
They may with flowers worship me.
What profits them whatever they do ?
I am indifferent to praise and blame.

39. *ā'sābol pa'ḍy-nyam sāsā*

Let them mock at me and call me names.
If a true devotee of Siva I be,
I shall not feel distressed nor hurt.
Can a few ashes a mirror befoul[1] ?

40. *mūḍ zā'nīth pa'shith ta ko'r*

Though you are wise, be as a fool;
Though you can see, be as one blind[2];
Though you can hear, be as one deaf[3];
Patiently bear with all you meet,
and politely talk to everyone.
This practice surely will lead you
to the realisation of the Truth.

41. *manasu'y mān bhavasaras*

Ocean and the mind of man are both alike :
Under the ocean's bottom lies
the destructive fire, vadvāgni[4];

1. The ashes serve rather as polish.
2. lit., one-eyed.
3. Var., dumb, but Bhaskara (LVRB) "*zo'r ta ko'l*" (deaf and dumb): "*shrutvā sarvam shrotrahīnena bhāvyam.*"
4. *Vadvāgni* which, according to legend, would destroy the whole world if it were to burst forth from under the ocean.

And in the breast of man doth rage
    the fire of wrath.
When the fire breaks out, its flames
    of angry, abusive words,
    sear and scorch and burn.
But if one ponders unruffled and calm,
and weighs the words, though angry they be,
They have no substance, no, nor weight.

42. *rut ta krut soruy pazyam*

Ill or well, whatever befalls,
    let it come.
My ears will not hear,
My eyes will not see.
When the Voice calls from within
    the inmost mind,
The lamp of faith burns steady and bright
    even in the wind.

43. *mandachi hā'nkal kar tshe'nyam*

When can I break the bonds of shame ?
When I am indifferent to jibes and jeers.
When can I discard the robe of dignity ?
When desires cease to nag my mind.

44. *parān parān zyav tāl pho'jim*

I have worn out my palate and tongue
    reading the holy books,
But I have not learnt the practices
    that would please my Lord.
I have worn thin my finger and thumb
    telling the rosary beads,

But I have not been able to dispel
duality from my mind.

45. *avyastā'ry pothyan chī hā māli parān*

The thoughtless read the holy books
As parrots, in their cage, recite "*Rām, Rām.*"
Their reading is like churning water,
Fruitless effort, ridiculous conceit.

46. *parun swalab pālun dwarlab*

It is easy to read and to recite;
It is hard to practice what one reads,
And, reading. seek out the Self within.
By constant practice, not by books,
Conviction grew within my heart
Of God, Who is Consciousness-Bliss.

47. *Parun polum apuruy po'rum*

I practised what I read,
And learnt what was not taught.
From its jungle abode
I brought the lion down
as I a jackal would;
(From pleasures of the world
I pulled my mind away).
I practised what I preached,
and scored the goal.

48. *hyath ka'rith rāj pheri-nā*

You will not know peace of mind
if you a kingdom gain,

Nor will you gain content or rest
if you give it away.
Only the man, free from desire,
will never die.
Only he has true knowledge
Who, though alive, is as one dead,
dead to all desire.

49. *yi yi karu'm kara pyatrun pānas*

I have to suffer the consequence
of whatever I do,
even if I work for others' gain.
But if, with mind from attachment free,
I dedicate all works to God,
It will be well for me wherever I be,
here and hereafter.

50. *kava chukh divān anine ba'tsh*

Why do you grope thus like the blind ?
Pray, doubt not what I say to you :
If you are wise, enter within
And see the Lord Himself is there.
You need not search Him here and there.

51. *pavan pū'rith yus ani vagi*

He who can direct his *prāna* aright,
is not troubled by hunger or thirst.
And he who can do this unto the end
is born fortunate[1] in this world.

1. LVRB. "*samsāre saphalam asya jīvitam*" (His life here has been fruitful).

52. *tsitta twarug gagana bramavon*

The steed of mind speedeth over the sky,
And, in the twinkling of the eye,
A hundred thousand leagues traverseth he.
Yet a man of discriminationc an control
the curvetting steed,
And, on the wheels of *prāna* and *apāna*, guide
his chariot aright.

53. *tsyath amarpathi tha'vy-ze*

Keep your mind intent upon
the path that leads to immortality.
Should it stray from the path,
it will fall into evil ways.
Be firm with it and have no fear;
For mind is like a suckling baby,
which tosses restless even in its mother's lap.

54. *kus mari ta kasū māran*

Who dies ? Who is slain ?
He who forsakes God's Name,
And gets involved in worldly cares.
It's he who dies. It's he who is slain.

55. *gwarashabdas yus yatsh patsh bare*

He who has faith in Guru's word,
And with true knowledge for the rein
Guides aright the steed of mind,
And holds his senses in control,
'Tis he enjoys the peace of mind.
He will not die, nor be slain.

56. *graṭa chu pherān zere zere*

Sure and steady the mill will turn
once you propel the wheel.
Mind is the pivot, it should know
how best to turn the mill.
And once it turns, it will grind fine,
And grain will find its way to the mill.

57. *Shiv chuy thali thali rozān*

Siva abides in all that is, everywhere;
Then do not discriminate between
a Hindu or a Musalman.
If thou art wise, know thyself;
That is true knowledge of the Lord.

58. *mithyā kapaṭ asath trovum*

I renounced fraud, untruth, deceit;
I taught my mind to see the One
in all my fellow-men.
How could I then discriminate
between man and man,
And not accept the food offered to me
by brother man ?

59. *mūḍo kray chay na dhārun ta pārun*

O fool, right action does not lie
in observing fasts and ceremonial rites.
O fool, right action does not lie
in providing for bodily comfort and ease.[1]

1. Var., in observing the Five Fires (*Pancāgni*).

In contemplation of the Self alone
is right action and right counsel for you.

60. *mā'rith pānts būth tim phalha'nḍy*

First feed the Five *Bhūta*-s[1] on the grain
and cates of self-awareness;
Thus fed, offer these fatted rams
as sacrifice unto the Lord.
Then you will know, O restless one,
the abode of the Supreme.
Ceremonial rites and pieties
will cease to be binding on you;
And even the 'left-handed'[2] practices
will bring no harm to you.

61. *vwath rainyā artsun sakhar*

Lady, arise and prepare for worship
with wine and flesh and cates.
If you know the changeless Supreme State
(of Paramasiva),
Take and eat them in the company of
fellow Tantric adepts.
(It matters not if, violating custom,
you practice "left-handed" rites.[3])

1. The five *bhūta*-s, *mahābhūta*-s, are the five factors constituting the principles of experience of the sensible universe, viz., solidity, liquidity, formativity, aeriality and vacuity.
2. Reference to *Vāmamārga* ritual.
3. The rites of Kaulacār, a Shākta cult. The last line is not clear and two variants are given with two different interpretations. The one within brackets is given by Grierson; the other, preceding it, is given by Anand Kaul, and this I think is the better interpretation. The last line (see AK, p. 17) being *"he' shikhar khe' shikhar hyath"*. Reference is to *Cakrayāg* of the Kaula-s. Wine, meat and cates were used in

62. *gyānamārg chay hākavā'r*

The pathway of *Jnana* is a kailyard;
Fence it with self-restraint and pious deeds.
Then let the goats of former karma
    browse in it and fattened be
    as animals fit for sacrifice
    at the altar of the Mother.
(Goats of past actions and their fruits
    slain in sacrifice,
    leaving no karma behind),
The kailyard of karma thus browsed away,
    you gain release.

63. *shishiras vuth kus raṭe*

Who can stop the eaves' drip during the frost ?
Who can hold wind in the palm of his hand ?
Who can see the sun in the darkness of night ?
He who holds his senses under control,
Can in the dark catch hold of the sun,
(Can see the Light in the darkness of the soul).

64. *shīl ta mān chuy pony kranje*

Like water in a colander are name and fame :
    they do not last.
Whoever in his fist can hold[1] a storm,
Or tether an elephant with a hair of his head,
(Whoever controls the storms in his breast,
Or tethers the wild elephant of desire),
'Tis he whose name and fame endure.

worship as symbolic for man's passions, desires and sensual enjoyments; and these too were offered as sacrifice to the Divine Mother.

1. lit., like a wrestler, a strong man.

65. *laz kāsī shīt nivārī*

It covers your shame,
Saves you from cold,
Its food and drink—
Mere water and grass.
Who counselled you, O brahmin,
To slaughter a living sheep
as a sacrifice
Unto a lifeless stone ?

66. *dīva vaṭā divur vaṭā*

The idol is but stone,
The temple is but stone,
From top to bottom all is stone.
Whom will you worship, O stubborn[1] Pandit ?
Let *prāna* and the mind unite
(as an offering to your God).[2]

67. *kush posh tel ḍīph zal nā gatshe*

He does not need the *kusa* grass,
nor sesame seed;
Flowers and water He does not need.
He who, in honest faith, accepts
his Guru's word,
On Siva meditates constantly,
He, full of joy, from action freed,
will not be born again.[3]

1. *hūṭa*, adjective, is probably from Sanskrit *haṭh*, akin to Hindi *haṭhī* and *hūḍ*. cf., LV, 17, learned.
2. Reference to yogic *prānāgnihotra*.
3. Var., LVRB, 45 : *say da'py-ze sahazākriye* (His is the true worship of the Lord) is the better reading.

68. *kus push ta kwasa pushā'nī*

Who is the florist, who the flower-girl ?
With what flowers should He be worshipped ?
In what water should He be bathed ?
With what *mantra* should we awaken Shankara,
Who abides in the Self ?

69. *man push tay yatsh pushā'nī*

Mind is the florist, Devotion the flower-girl,
who bring flower-wreaths for Him.
He should be worshipped with the flowers
of faith,
And bathed in the nectar of the Mystic Moon.
Silence is the mantra that awakens Him;
(And, in the deep stillness of the mind,
He wakes up in the inmost Self).

70. *gagan tsu'y bhūtal tsu'y*

Thou art the earth, Thou art the sky,
Thou art the air, the day and the night;
The sacrificial corn Thou,
And unction of the sandal-paste.
Thou art the water, Thou art the flowers,
Thou art all these and everything.
What may I, in worship, bring to Thee ?

71. *dwādashānta manḍal yas dīvas thaji*

He who knows the *Dvādashānta Manḍala*[1]
as the abode of God,

1. *'mandal'* : orb, disc, sphere, of *'dvādashānta'* or locality of it; *'dvādashāntah'*, a measure of twelve fingers; literally, the end of twelve

And knows the constant Sound[1] that is borne upon
the *prāna* rising from the heart to the nose,
All vain imaginings flee from his mind,
without effort, naturally;
He knows no God other than the Self,
nor need he worship any other god.

72. *akuy Omkār yas nābi*[2] *dare*

He in whose navel constantly abides
none other than the One Omkār,
Who builds a bridge between his own
and Cosmic Consciousness[3],
By making mind one with this mighty spell—
What need has he for a thousand other spells ?

73. *Shiv vā Keshava vā Zin vā*

Siva or Keshava or Jina,[4]

fingers, here the distance found by measuring. Cf. *ādikotih : hrdayam, antakotih : dvādashāntah; tayoh prānollāsavishrāntyavasare citta-niveshanena parishīlanam*—PR, pp. 88-89, 135. The *prāna* starts at the point of *hrdaya* (*prānollāsa*) and ends (*vishrānti*) at *dvādashānta*, i.e., at a distance of twelve fingers from it. Also called *antahdvādashānta*, i. e., the heart, and *bāhirdvādashānta*, twelve fingers' distance from it. See also *Svacchanda Tantram* (KSTS, 38) p. 65, verse 111; and *Vijnāna Bhairava* (KSTS, 8) verses 49, 51.

1. Sans. *anāhata*, the eternal sound, self-created, the mystic syllable OM.
2. *nābi* : navel, cf. "*parāvāk mulacakrastha, pashyantī nābhīsamsthitā. . .*"
3. *Brahmānda*, lit., Brahma's egg, the universe, used also of *brahma-randhra* in the crown of the head. Lit., a bridge between the *manipura cakra* and *brahma-randhra*, with Omkār as the mantra; fig., between *kumbha* (*ghaṭa*, the individual) and Brahmānda, the Cosmic Whole.
Var. LV, 34 : For whom the *kumbhaka* exercise formeth a bridge to the *Brahma-randhra*.
4. The Buddha. In later Sanskrit literature "Jina" is used for the Buddha.

Or Brahma, the lotus-born Lord,
Whatever name He bear,
May He remove from me
the sickness of the world !
It may be He or He or He
(For He is One though called variously).

74. *Lal bo lūtshu's tshānḍān ta gārān*

I, Lalla, searched and sought for Him,
And even beyond my strength I strove.
Finding His doors bolted and barred
I longed the more;
And firmly resolved, I stood just there
with longing and love,
Fixing my gaze upon His door.

75. *lolu'ki vwakhli vā'linj pishim*

In the mortar of love I ground my heart,
I parched and burnt and ate it out.
Thus, all my evil passions removed,
I sat serene and unperturbed.
Yet still I doubt if I can know
Whether I shall die or I shall live
(and find release from birth and death).

76. *sahazas sham ta dam na gatshi*

Not by ascetic practices is the Self realised;
Nor by desire[1] can you gain
the Portals of Release.

1. The discernment of *Sahaza*, the true nature of the Self, is necessary. cf., Var., LVRB, 29 : *ye'tshi prāvakh muktidvār* (Through ardent longing alone you will gain. . .)

In contemplation you may be absorbed
    as salt in water,
Yet hard it is for you to gain
    the true knowledge of the Self.

77. *zanu'ni zāyāy ru'ty tay ku'tiy*

Plump and comely were they born,
Causing their mother's womb great pain;
Yet to the womb they come again.
Siva indeed is hard to reach;
Pray, heed the doctrine this teaches you.[1]

78. *ywasay shīl pīṭhas ta paṭas*

Itself a part of the rocky earth,
It is the self-same stone that makes
A pavement, seat or pedestal,
Or a mill-stone for a grinding mill.
Siva indeed is hard to reach;
Then heed the doctrine this teaches you.

79. *rav mata thali thali tā'pytan*

Will the sun not shine on all alike
But give heat only to holy lands ?
Will Varuna[2] not visit all homes alike
But visit only the homes of the good ?
Siva indeed is hard to reach;
Then heed the doctrine this teaches you.

1 that is, take a lesson from this and reflect upon it.
2. The god of water.

80. *zānahā' nāḍi-dal mana ra'ṭith*

If I knew how to control my *nāḍi*-s,[1]
How to sever them from the pull of desire,
How to bind them to the inner Self,
How to cut the bonds of sorrow,
I should have known how to compound
the Elixir of Life.
Siva indeed is hard to reach;
Then heed the doctrine this teaches you.

81. *yihay māira-rūp pay diye*

As mother a woman suckles a baby,
As wife she dallies amorously in love,
As *māyā* she takes one's life in the end—
And yet in all these forms a woman she.
Siva indeed is hard to reach;
Then heed the doctrine this teaches you.

82. *Shiv chury zā'vyul zāl vāhrā'vith*

Like a tenuous web Siva spreads Himself,
Penetrating all frames of all things.
If while alive, you cannot see Him,
How can you see Him after death ?
Think deep and sift the true Self from the self.

83. *tū'ri salil kho'ṭ tā'y tū're*

When water freezes in the cold,
it turns to snow and ice.[2]

1. The tubes through which the vital airs circulate of which the principal ones are ten, cf. *dashi nādi vāv,* the vital airs of ten *nāḍi-s, Infra* No. 91.
2. SSV, p. 98, lines 4-5, *jalam himan ca yo veda. . .*

Reflect, O man, that one becomes
three different things[1];
And when the sun shines, the three
melt into one again.
So when the sun of pure Consciousness shines,
The world of living and lifeless things,
the universe and whatever exists,
are, in the Supreme, seen as one.

84. *ase pwande zwase zāme*

Laughing, sneezing, coughing, yawning,
Bathing in sacred pools,
Going about unclothed throughout the year[2],
He is about you all the time—
In all these forms recognize Him.

85. *bān go'l tay prakāsh āv zūne*

The sun sets, the moon begins to shine[3];
The moon sets, the mind alone is left;
The mind dissolved, nothing remains;
Earth, atmosphere and sky[4] depart,
(And in the Supreme are absorbed).

1. *byan* : *māyā (*multiplicity*)*; *byanābyan* : *vidyā (*unity in multiplicity*)*: *abyan* : *Śakti (*unity*)*. Or, respectively, *idam idam*, *aham idam*, *aham*.
2. Var. LVRB *nonuy āse* : He is to be seen in all these activities all the year round. He is close to you as yourself,"*pashyātmadevam nijideha eva*." Also see KSTS 8, sloka 118. "*kshutādyante bhaye shoke . . . brahmasattamayī dashā, tām tatra tatra avasare vimarshya . . .*
3. *Prānā* the sun moving upwards, *apāna* the moon moving downwards. Cf., "*prānātmā ravih ūrdhva-mukhatvena caran*; *tālvādi-ātmani antare sthitah; candrah apānātma adhomukhatvena. . .*"—*Tantrāloka* (KSTS 36), Vol. IV,pp. 26-28.
4. *Bhūh*, *Bhuvah*, *Svah*.

86. *mal vwandi zolum jigar morum*

I burnt the foulness of my soul,
I slew my heart, its passions all,
I spread my garment's hem, and sat
just there, on bended knees,
in utter surrender unto Him.
My fame as Lalla spread afar.

87. *latan hund māz lāryom vatan*

The soles of my feet wore off on the roads
while I wandered in search of Him.
Then lo ! on a sudden, I saw
That He was all and everywhere,
I had nowhere to go in search of Him.
This was the Truth of a hundred truths.
Whoever learn of it, will they not wonder ?
Will they not be mad for joy ?

88. *po't zūni vo'thith mo't bolanovum*

In the last watch of the moonlit night,
remonstrating with my wayward mind,
I soothed my pain with the love of God.
Gently, gently, accosting myself,
"O Lalla, Lalla, Lalla",
I woke my Love, my Lord and Master,
In whom absorbed, my mind was cleansed
of its defilement by the Ten.[1]

1. The ten *indriya*-s, *dahe,* five organs of sense and five organs of action. Var., *dihe :* Even my body was purified.

89. *tanthu'r gali tay manthu'r mwatse*

Let go the sacred *tantra* rites[1],
Only the *mantra* sound remains.
And when the *mantra* sound departs,
Only the *citta* is left behind.
Then lo ! the *citta* itself is gone,
And there is nothing left behind;
The void merges in the Void
(the silent *citta* in Pure Consciousness.)[2]

90. *lūb mārun sahaz vyatsārun*

Realisation is rare indeed :
Seek not afar, it is near, by you.
First slay Desire, then still the mind,
giving up vain imaginings;
Then meditate on the Self within,
And lo ! the void merges in the Void.
(The *citta* merges in the *Cit*.)

91. *tsitta-twarug vagi hyath ro'ṭum*

I reined in the steed of the mind,
And, by constant practice, brought together
the *prāna*-s coursing the ten *nāḍi*-s.
Then the nectar of the Mystic Moon
flowed down, suffusing my whole being,
And the void merged in the Void,
(The stilled mind merged in Pure Consciousness).

1. cf., LV 11, texts, holy books.
2. LVRB 11, *drashṭā shiṣyate citsvarūpam*: For "*shunya* goes to *shunya*", see chapter 5, *supra*, p. 82; *shunya* is not emptiness.

92. *sa'ts-sas na sātas pa'ts-sas na rumas*

On nothing else I built my hopes,
In nothing else I put my trust—
My *vaakh*[1] brought me the wine I drank,
My *vaakh* gave me the strength to seize
The darkness that within me lurked.
I rolled it up and knocked it down,
And tore it to pieces (dissipating
the darkness of my soul).

93. *she' van tsa'ṭith shashikal vuzu'm*

Cutting my way through Six Forests[2],
I came upon the Digit of the Moon.[3]
By means of the practice of *prānāpāna*[4],
The world of matter shrank for me.
Then roasting my heart in the fire of love,
I found my God.

94. *Omkār ye'li layi o'num*

When I became one with the Supreme Word[5],
My body blazed as red-hot coal[6],
Then I gave up the Path of the Six[7],
and betook myself to the straight true Path[8],

1. Verse-sayings of Lalla.
2. LV : *Cakra*-s. LVRB : "*kāmādikam kānena shaṭkam etat*, i. e., *kāma, krodha, lobha, moha, mad* and *ahankāra*. 3. Sahasrāra.
4. lit., *pavan* (vital airs); but see LV : "by controlling my vital airs. . ."
5. Aum 6. Such blazing is an actual experience. It does not mean burning out impurity or selfhood.
7. "Ṣaḍadhva", six paths according to Ānavopāya of Trika Darshana, viz., *varna, mantra, pada, kalā, tattva* and *bhuvana*.
8. She has now taken to the Shāmbhavopāya, the straight easy path which requires no rigorous *sādhana*. PR, pp. 20 & 83(*sukhopāyameva*), for Var., see LV. 82.

Which led me to the Abode of Light.

95. *he gwarā parameshwarā*

O Guru, you are as a god to me,
Tell me, you know the secret truth.
Both *Prāna*-s rise from 'Kandapura',
the "place of the Bulb", the navel region,
Why is *hāh* hot, why is *huh* cold ?

96. *nābisthāna chay prakrath zalavu'nī*

At the navel region is the Place of the Sun,
Where Prakriti glows as hot as fire;
From here hot breath rises to the throat.
At the crown of the head is the Place of the Moon,
From here cool nectar down the *nāḍi*-s flows,
Thus *hāh* is hot, and *huh* is cold.

97. *Lal bo drāyas lolare*

For love that would not let me be,
I, Lalla, set forth in search of Him.
And toiled and toiled for days and nights.
Then lo ! the most auspicious moment of life—
I saw the Panḍit in my own home.

98. *dama dama ko'rmas daman āye*[1]

Gently, gently, I trained my mind
to suspend its processes and thoughts.[2]
Then (in the windless calm), the flame of the Lamp,
shining steady and bright,
Revealed my true nature unto me.

1. & 2. Var., LV. 4 "slowly, slowly, did I stop my breath in the bellows-pipe (of my throat)", *damādam ko'rmas daman-hāle.*

In the dark recesses of my soul[1]
I seized upon Him and held Him fast.
Then I diffused the inner light,
(and within, without, all was Light).

99. *tshānḍān lūtshu's pā'ny pānas*

Searching the Self, I wearied myself;
For none by searching ever gained
The secret knowledge beyond the mind.
I stopped seearching, and love led me
to the Tavern[2] door.
There I found wine jars aplenty,
But none desiring to drink from them.

100. *makuris zan mal tso'lum manas*

Foulness from my mind was cleared
as ashes from a mirror,
Then recognition of Him came to me
unmistakable and clear.
And when I saw Him close by me,
He was all and I was not,
(and there was nothing else).

101. *karu'm zu' kāran tre' ko'mbith*[3]

Do away with *karma*-s two[4] and causes three[5],

1. *Gaṭi*, "in the darkness itself." Better reading LVRB : *svasmindehe* (in my ownself).
2. 'al-thān', the abode of *amrita* (nectar), of the Supreme, which is also in the Self of man though he wearies himself searching Him everywhere else.
3. Var., LV, 75 : "by practising kumbhaka yoga."
4. Good and bad.
5. The three *mala*-s, impurities, that bring the world into being, viz.,

and you will be honoured in the world to come.
Arise, ascend and cut through the Sun's orb[1],
and you will overcome the fear of death.

102. *gyānu'ky ambar pū'rith tane*

In the robe of *Jnāna* clad,
On the tablet of her heart engraved
the words that Lalla spoke,
And by means of the mystic syllable OM,
Lalla merged in her 'Cit-Jyoti',
The luminous light of pure Consciousness;
And thus dispelled the fear of death.

103. *shūny-yuk mā'dān ko'ḍum pānas*

I traversed the vastness of the Void alone,
leaving behind me reason and sense,
Then came upon[2] the secret of the Self;
And, all on a sudden, unexpectedly,
In mud[3] the lotus bloomed for me.

104. *samsāras āyas tapasī*

A *tapasvin* into the world came I,

ānavamala, of finitude; māyiyīmala, of multiplicity; kārmamala, of resultant pleasure and pain from karma.

1. *Surya-manḍala*, through which the soul has to pass on its way to the Supreme; the Kunḍalinī has to cut its way from Mūlādhāra through Manipura, the seat of Agni, to Sahasrāra, the seat of the Moon, the abode of Siva.
2. lit., I became a confidante of my Self.
3. Kashmiri *hyal*, dirty ground, covered with litter, mud, dirt used as manure. Or, variant, *hil*, an aquatic weed abundantly growing in Dal Lake. Fig.. What was valueless (my body or myself) became precious and a thing of beauty and joy.

And *Bodha* illumined my path to the Self.[1]
Alike for me is life and death:
Happy to live and happy to die,
I mourn for none, none mourns for me.[2]

105. *Lal bo drāyas kapsi poshici sa'tsu'y* (LV, 102 & 10[illegible])

Hoping to bloom like a cotton flower,
I, Lalla, set forth in the colourful world.
But soon the cleaner and the carder came
and gave me hard knocks and blows.
Spun into a gossamar yarn
by a woman spinner on her spinning wheel,
I was helplessly hung upon a loom,
and given more knocks from the weaver's broom.

Now turned into cloth, I was dashed and dashed
by the washerman on the washing-stone.
Then into a large mortar made of stone,
he threw me, and with his grimy feet,
rubbed me with fuller's earth and soap.
The tailor now worked his scissors on me,
and cut me with care, piece by piece.
Thus was it that I, Lalla, at last
entered the High Estate of God.

106. *rāza-hams ā'sith sapudukh ko'luy*

Thou wert a royal swan once,
now turned mute.[3]

1. Var., LV, 35. Also LVRB, 34. "*prāptā vishuddham sahajam prabodham*", where *sahaja* as an adjective qualifies *prabodham*.
2. lit., I die for none, none dies for me. Cf.,Utpala's *Siva Stotrāvali*, xiii. 3 : . . .*tishṭatah satatam arcitah prabhum jīvitam mratām athānyath astu me*".
3. at seeing *something* that has struck Lalla dumb. Lalla has seen, but

Someone, it seems, has run off with
something of thine.
When the mill-stone stopped, the grain channel
was choked with grain,
And away ran the miller with the grain.

107. *prathu'y tīrthan gatshān sa'ny-yā'sy*

The pilgrim sannyāsin goes from shrine to shrine,
Seeking to meet Him who abides within himself.
Knowing the truth, O soul, be not misled;
It is distance that makes the turf look green,

108. *kandyav geh te'zy kandyav vanvās*

Some leave their home, some the hermitage,
But the restless mind knows no rest.
Then watch your breath, day and night,
And stay where you are.

109. *kalan kālazā'ly yo'dvay tse' go'l*

Should you destroy vain imaginings, desires,
which form the very web of time;
Should you realize the Lord, all-pervading
and yet untouched and pure,
You may live the life of a householder,
Or a hermit's life in a hermitage,
living the truth that you have known.

she cannot describe what she has seen. Has she had a glimpse of *vishvarūpā*, the Cosmic Form, its indescribable splendour and awe, so that she, who was vocal till now, cannot speak ? That *something* has taken away her powers of speech (SLK, p. 65). cf., LV, 86.

110. *Shiv Shiv karān hamsagath so'rith*

Constantly invoking the name of Siva,
Meditating on the Way of the Swan[1],
From attchment and duality set free—
Such a one, even if busily engaged
in the affairs of the world, both day and night,
Wins the favour of the God of gods.

111. *kenh chiy ne'ndriha'tiy vudiy*

Some though asleep are yet awake;
Some though awake are yet asleep;
Despite ablutions some are unclean;
Despite householders' active life,
Some, by their actions, are untouched.

112. *zal thāmavun hutavāh tu'ru'nāvun*

To stop a running stream, to cool a raging fire,
To roam the skies on sandalled feet,
To milk a wooden cow—
All this is fraud and jugglery.

113. *yath saras sarpho'l na ve'tsiy*

To the lake[2] too small even for a mustard seed,
All living beings come to quench their thirst;
And into it, as soon as born,
keep falling, falling,
Deer, jackal, rhinoceros, sea-elephants
and all.

1. Mystic name for "Soham" (I am He) which reversed, becomes "Hamsa" (Swan), sometimes used to denote Paramasiva.
2. Of earthly existence, as against the Eternal.

114. *tre'yi ne'ngi sarāh sa'ry-saras*

Three times the lake overflowed its shore;
Once its waters and the sky did meet
From Haramukh to Kaunsar[1] in one vast sheet.
Seven times I saw the lake vanishing in the void.
I remember having seen, in former lives,
    through aeons of time,
These dissolutions of the worlds and their rebirth.

115. *mad pyuvum syanda-zalan yaitu*

However many parts I played upon the stage,
However often I quaffed that wine,
    the water of the Syand[2],
However many lumps of human flesh I ate,
Yet I am the same Lalla still.
What profiteth it all to me ?

116. *a'sī ā'sy ta a'sī āsav*

In time past, we were;
In time future, we shall be;
Throughout the ages, we have been.
For ever the sun rises and sets;
For ever Siva creates, dissolves,
    and creates again.

117. *dyan tshe'zi ta razan āse*

When the light of the day is quenched
    in the darkness of the night,

1. From Haramukh mountain in the north to Kaunsarnāg in the south.
2. A tributary of the Jhelum in Kashmir.

The earth extends to meet and dissolve
in the ethereal sky,
And (on *amāvasya*[1]) all is blank and dark eclipse.
But (strange !) Rāhu, the Demon of eclipse,
is swallowed by the New-born Moon.
The illumination of Cit-Ātman
is the true worship of Siva, the Supreme.

118. *tsidānandas gyānaprakāshas*

They who have known the Supreme Self,
Cidānanda Jnānaprakāsha,
(compact of the Blisss of Pure Consiousness
and Light of Knowledge Absolute)—
They are the *Jivan-mukta*-s (who,
while alive, have found release
from ever-recurring birth and death).
The ignorant add knot to knot, in hundreds,
to the tangled web of *samsāra*,
its recurrent birth,
its recurrent death.

119. *kus dingi ta kus zāgi*

Who dozes off ? Who is alert ?
What lake constantly oozeth away ?
What should be offered in worship to God ?

1. On the *amāvasya* of solar eclipse, Rāhu is supposed, by popular tradition, to swallow the sun. But, says Lalla, that the seeker who treads the path has the experience of the manifested universe, the sun and the sky and all the worlds, vanishing and becoming one with the unmanifested all-pervading *Akshara*. There, for the moment, it seems to be "dark, irretrievably dark" in the great Void; but soon it is lit up by the New-born Moon, the Parā-Samvit, which is the illumination of the Higher Consciousness revealing the abode of the Supreme Siva.

What supreme station should one gain ?

120. *man dingi ta akul zāgi*

It is the mind that dozeth off:
It is the Akula[1] Transcendent that is ever alert.
The mighty senses are the lake
constantly oozing out,
constantly filled again.
The constant awareness of the Self
is worship befitting the Lord,
And Sivahood the supreme station
man should gain.

121. *Shiv gur tay Keshav palanas*

Siva is the horse,
Vishnu holds the saddle,
And Brahma the stirrups.
It is the yogi who,
in the light of his yoga, knows
Which god can mount the horse ?

122. *anāhath kha-swarūp shūnyālay*

He who is the eternal 'Anāhata',
The ever-unobstructed sound of OM ;
Whose is the all-permeating form
of the etherial sky ;
Whose dwelling[2] is the vast transcendent Void ;
Who has no name, caste, gotra, nor form ;
Who is Pure, Undifferentiated Self-awareness ;

1. Paramasiva beyond the *Kula*, the thirty-six *Tattva*-s, the universe.
2. Or, perhaps better, who is the abode (ground, home) of . . .

Who is "Nāda-Bindu", the Logos and the Light[1]—
He is the God Who mounts the horse.

123. *kunyar-ay bozakh kuni no rozakh*

Would you understand what Oneness[2] is ?
It has turned me into nothingness.
Though He is One, Alone, and All,
Yet I am caught in the War of Two[3]
Though He has neither colour nor form,
Yet I am caught in His wondrous forms.[4]

124. *rangas manz chuy byo'n byo'n labun*

He is in myriad colours and forms,[5]
    Seek Him out.
Patiently suffer whatever your lot,
    And happy be
Anger and hate and enmity,
    You must destroy.
All this done, though hard it be,
    Behold thy God.[6]

125. *dishi āyas dash dish tīlith*

I roamed the ten directions and

1. The Sound and the Dot, mystically represented by the semicircle and the bindu (dot) of the anunāsika of the Syllable OM as it is written. By an extension of meaning, *nādā-bindū* or, in the Āgama-s, more precisely, *Nāda-Viṇdu* (*Nāda* representing Shakti and *Vindu*, Siva) represents the ultimate Supreme, Paramasiva.
2. Unity of Existence.
3. Duality.
4. Multiplicity.
5. lit., *rangas manz*, on the stage of the world where the play is going on.
6. lit., Siva.

pierced the wind and the void.
I closed the nine gates of the body and
shut out the Thirty-six.[1]
Wherever I looked, I found the Lord,
Within, without, and in the Void.[2]

126. *tana mana gayas bo tas kunuy*

I turned to Him heart and soul,
And heard the ringing of the Bell of Truth.
There, in *dhārana*, fixed in thought,
I soared the Sky and the Region of Light.[3]

127. *a'ndriy āyas tsa'ndru'y gārān*

I searched within for the Mystic Moon,
For like seeks out the like.
Thou art all this and this and this;
There is none else but Thee.
What then is the meaning of Thy sport,
Of Thy creation's wondrous forms ?

128. *yimay she' tse' timay she' me'*

O Lord of the Dark Blue Throat,
I have the very same Six Thou hast.

1. The 36 *tattva*-s (lIterally, thatnesses) the categories or principles from Paramasiva to the earth, according to the Trika Saiva cosmology.
2. Within the mind, in the world outside, and in the Impersonal Transcendent.
3. lit.. had the experience of *Ākāsha* and *Prakāsha*. Lalla heard the ever-unobstructed (*anāhata*) sound of OM (The Bell of Truth); and, in her deep concentration. became absorbed in the Impersonal Transcendent (the Sky, the Void). But she went beyond, ascending to the abode of Paramasiva who, according to Trika Darshana, is both *Prakāsha* and *Vimarsha*, Light and Self-Awareness. See Chapter 3 *supra*.

And yet, estranged from Thee,
I suffer misery.
There surely is this difference :
Thou art the master of the Six[1],
By the Six[2] I have been robbed.

129. *nātha nā pān na par zonum*

Lord, I did not know who I was,
nor Thou, the Supreme Lord of all.
I knew only this body of mine always.[3]
The relation between Thou and me,
That Thou art I and I am Thou
and both are one, I did not know.
(But now I know),
To ask : 'who art Thou, who am I ?'
is doubt of doubts.

130. *Lal bo tsāyas swaman bāgabaras*

I, Lalla, entered by the garden-gate
of mine own mind,
And there (O joy !) saw Siva with Shakti
sealed in one;
And there itself I merged in the Lake
of Immortal Bliss.
Now while alive I am unchained
from the wheel of birth and death,
What can the world do unto me ?

1. Sovereign power, omnipotence, omniscience, All-inclusiveness, eternality, All-pervasiveness (that is, in Trika : *māyā shakti, sarvakartritva, sarvajnatva, pūrnatva, nityatva*, and *vyāpakatva* respectively).
2. The six *kancuka*-s, coverings of limitation, viz., *māyā, kalā, vidyā, rāga, kāl, niyati*.
3. *sadā'y bodum yīkuy deha* (LVRB, 7) but cf., . . . *yi kwadeha*, LV, 7 : "Continually have I mortified this vile body."

131. *tsu'y dīva gartas ta dharthī srazakh*

Thou dost pervade all shapes and forms,
Thou breathest life into all frames,
The whole creation hums with Thy silent sound[1].
Who can measure the Immeasurable, O Lord !

132. *par ta pān ye'my so'muy mon*

He who regards himself and others alike,
He who regards alike both day and night,
He whose mind is free from duality—
He alone hath seen the God of gods.

133. *abhyā'sy savikā'sy layi vo'thū*

By oft-repeated practice, the wide expanse
of manifested universe is lifted to absorption;
And the *saguna* world, of forms and qualities,
merges in the vastness of the Void
with a splash of water on water falling;
Then the ethereal Void dissolves,
and the Ineffable Supreme alone remains.
This, O Bhaṭṭa[2], is the Truth to gain.

134. *vākh mānas kwal akwal nā ate*

Here there is neither word nor thought,
Transcendent nor non-Transcendent here.
Vows of silence and mystic *mudra*-s
cannot gain you admittance here.
Even Siva and Shakti (*Tattva*-s) remain not here.

1. The *Anāhata nād,* the AUM.
2. The Kashmiri Panḍit (Brahmin) is often so called.

The Somewhat that remains is the Truth
to know and realise.

135. *tsu' nā bo nā dhey nā dhyān*

Here there is neither thou nor I,
No "postured thought", nothing to contemplate,
Even the All-Creator is forgot.
The ignorant blind[1] cannot see
the Ineffable Supreme hard to know.
But the pure, the wise, having seen[2]
merge in the Supreme.

136. *pānas lā'gith rūdukh me' tsu'*

Thou wert absorbed in Thine Own Self,
hidden from me;
I passed whole days in seeking Thee out.
But when I saw Thee in mine own Self,
O joy ! then Thou and I
disported ourselves in ecstasy.[3]

137. *tsyath no'vuy tsa'ndrama no'vuy*

The *citta*, the mind, is ever new,
The ever-changing moon is new,
And ever new the shoreless expanse
of waters[4] that I have seen.

1. Var., LVRB, 59 : "*anyā ḍyūṭhukh...*" (They) saw Other than all these, the Absolute, the Relationless (*Ananvaya*) "*kentsh nā anvay*".
2. *sat* : the whole objective universe. Var., LVRB : The good become absorbed in Him. See LV, where *sath* is said to mean 'the Seven Worlds'.
3. cf., LV, 44: "The second meaning" given there is what the words can not bear, however much their meaning may be strained.
4. *zalamay*, Sans. *jalamaya*. Grierson (LV. 93) explains it as a "waste

Since I, Lalla, have scoured my body and mind,
(emptied it of dead yesterdays
and tomorrows unborn),
I live in the ever-present Now,
(and all things always are to me)
for ever new and new.

138. *yi yi karu'm ko'rum suy artsun*

Whatever work I did became worship of the Lord;
Whatever word I uttered became a a *mantra*;[1]
Whatever this body of mine experienced became[2]
the *sādhana*-s of Saiva Tantra
illumining my path to Paramasiva.

of waters" at the time of *pralaya,* destruction of the Universe. Therefore, "the universe itself". It may rather be the shoreless ocean of existence or of Reality. Whatever the exact meaning, Lal Ded speaks of her complete transformation and 'renewal',

1. cf. SSV, III, 25—36: *sharirvrttirvratam* (26), *kathā japah* (27). (For such a one the normal daily routine of his becomes a *vrata*, that is, religious vows etc (26), and whatever he says becomes the recitation of a *mantra*).
2. LVRB, 58. "*yih yath lagyam dehas paritsay*". For Var., LV, 58. See KT, IX. 23, "*...yatra yatra mano yāti tatra tatra samādhayah* (wherever the mind goes there is a *samādhi* for it).

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6. DRAJ *Dvitīya Rājatarangiṇī*, Jonarāja, edited by Pandit Srikantha (Vishveshvarānanda Institute).
7. DV *Daughters of Vitasta*, Premnāth Bazāz (Pamposh Publications, New Delhi, 1959).
8. GNR *Lallā Vākya*, Gopi Nath Raina, Translation into Urdu (Vir Trading House, Amirakadal, Srinagar, 1959).
9. JLKJ *Lal Vākh*, J.L. Kaul Jalāli, Karan Nagar, Srinagar, 1956.
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15. LVA Appendix to LV above.

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18. NN *Nūrnāma*, (edited) Amīn Kāmil (J & K Academy, 1966).

19. NR *A Life of Nund Rishi*, Anand Kaul, reprint from *the Indian Antiquary*, Vols. LVIII, 1924, pp. 194-198, 221-224; Vol. LIX, 1930, pp. 28-32.

20. PNKB *A History of Kāshmir*, P. N. K. Bamzai (Metropolitan Delhi, 1962).

21. PR *Pratyabhijnāhrdyam* by Kshemrāja, English translation by Jaideva Singh (Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 1963).

22. RB *Rahasyopadeshah* of Rūpa Bhawāni (Alaksīshwarī Sāhibā Trust, Srinagar).

23. RCT *The Word of Lalla*, Sir Richard Temple (CUP, 1924).

24. RKP *A History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir* (1320-1819) by Dr. R. K. Parmu Ph. D. (People's Publishing House, Delhi, 1969).

25. RPL Library of the Directorate of Research, Museums and Publications, Lāl Mandi, Srinagar. Figures along with 'RPL' indicate the accession number of the book.

26. SCR *Early History and Culture in Kashmir*, S. C. Ray (Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 1969).

27. SLK *Mother Lal of Kashmir*, Shankar Lal Kaul, *Visvabhārati Quarterly*, pp. 46-71. An article giving

parallels from the experience of some famous Christian mystics, written with deep understanding and fine critical sensibility.

28. Stein, Sir Aurel, *Rājataranginī*, Vol. I.
29. Sūfī, G. M. D., 2 Vols., *Kashīr* (completed 1949, The University of the Panjab).
30. WC *Vaakh Lalla Īshwari*, Parts I and II (Urdu Edition by A. K. Wanchoo and English by Sarwanand Charāgi, 1939).

(C) Other Books recommended :

1. *Sufism*, A. J. Arberry.
2. *Islam*, Fazlur Rahman (a Doubleday Anchor Book A. 641).
3. *Islam*, Alfred Guillaume (Pelican A. 311).
4. *Iswarapratyabhijnā Vimarshinī*, Vols. 1 and 2, KSTS, 10 and 25.
5. SSV. *Siva Sutra Vimārshini*, KSTS, 1.
6. *Parā Praveshikā*, KSTS, 9.
7. *Tantrasāra*, KSTS, 19.
8. KT. *Kulārnava Tantra* (ullāsa I and IX, Rama Shaiva Trika Ashrama, Fatehkadal, Srinagar).
9. *Malini Vijaya Tantram*, KSTS, 35.
10. *Yoga-Sutras of Patanjali*, translated into English, M. N. Dvivedi (The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, 1947).
11. *The Valley of Kashmir* (1889-95), Sir Walter Lawrence.
12. *Khavātini Kashmir*, Muhammad-dīn Fauq (Pub. 1910, Urdu).
13. *Kā'shir Sha''iri Intikhwāb*, Professor Mohī-ud-dīn Hājinī, (Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1960).
14. *Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol. VIII, Part II, Sir George Abraham Grierson.
15. KSTS. *Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies* (Research and Publications Department, Srinagar).
16. *Siva Sūtra Vārttikam*, KSTS, 6.

A NOTE ON THE TEXT

(1) LVRB contains 60 vaakh with translation into Sanskrit.

(2) LV contains these 60 as the first 60 vaakh and 49 others, totalling 109 in all. It also contains an appendix of verses ascribed to Lalla from KN.

(3) The vaakh given in KN. are 15 in all, out of which five also occur in LV, Nos. 96, 97, 98, 99 and 100, and one, *āyeyi vā'nis gayi kāndras*, is not a vaakh but a proverb relating to the legend of the oven. KN thus contains only nine additional vaakh. The total of the vaakh in these three books comes to 118.

(4) AK contains additional 75 vaakh. Nine of these, Nos. 4, 14, 15, 23, 28, 29, 37, 38 and 64, are really two vaakh each though they are printed here as one each. AK thus contains nine more vaakh, that is, 84 in all.

(5) WC has 200 vaakh in all, out of which 180 are, variants notwithstanding, substantially the same as are given in 1, 2, 3 and 4 above. Only 20 of them are additional, Nos. 13, 52, 69, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 81, 82, 83, 100, 103, 108, 111, 149, 154, 158, 173, 189 (20).

(6) *Tārikhi Kabīr* (Pages 316-319) contains ten verses as specimen of Lalla's vaakh out of which only six are additional and new, the others appear elsewhere above.

(7) BBL also gives ten vaakh as the specimen out of which nine (Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10) occur in *Tārikhi*

Kabir, only one vaakh is therefore new. The total additional vaakh in books 6 and 7 are thus only 7.

(8) KLA gives 50 vaakhs.

(9) *Ka'shir Shā'yiri* (Professor M. Hajini), 19.

(10) AAA (pages 112 to 141) quotes 36 vaakh and one proverb, *Ho'nḍ ma'ry-tan kina kaṭh*; but none of these three books 8, 9 and 10 contains any new vaakh.

(11) JLKJ contains 38 vaakh but six of them, Nos. 4, 15, 22, 29, 31 and 38, occur in AK as Nos. 31, 35, 40, 75, 3 and 46 respectively. No. 31 is also included in WC as No. 14 and No. 46 also in AKR on page 102. Therefore, the total number of new vaakh is 32.

(12) GNR has four parts, containing a total of 93 vaakh, 25 of which occur in JLKJ and the rest in the other collections given above. There is no new vaakh. Total number of vaakh in these these two collections is only 32.

(13) AKR (pages 145-163) quotes 24 vaakh and proverb *Ho'nd ma'ry-tan* ..., and also 12 more (pages 102, 103, 123, 132, 133, 142, 143, 173, 174); but only one, on page 162, viz., a 13-line *vatsan* poem beginning, *zyana bronṭh ādamas zyan*, is an additional vaakh, which he quotes from *Sāz-o-sā'r-mas*, *Santūr* (published by Ghulām Mohd. Nūr Mohd). The additional vaakh is only 1.

The other collections :

(14) LD contains a selection of 135 vaakh and

(15) KS gives these 135 in the same order plus 26 more; but neither of these two selections contains any new vaakh.

(16) In KS. (Kashmiri Section in Devanagari script) appears, however, an article from Prithvi Nath Pushp (pages 11-12) reprinted from *Kwangaposh* which gives two vaakh, beginning (*a*) *brahma burjas pyaṭh vātanovum* and (*b*) *ka'ly-may po'rum ka'ly-may so'rum*, and these are additional, not given in any selection above, only 2.

The total number of vaakh ascribed to Lal Ded, printed up to date, are therefore 264.

There are, however, three vaakh, viz., LV Nos. 99, 100 and

KN No. 4, that are the work of Azīz Khan; and two AK Nos. 1 and 11, (which occur in RB. also) are certainly Rūpa Bhawānī's. The 13-line *vatsan* poem quoted from *Sāz-o-Santūr* in AKB, page 612, is also not Lal Ded's. Therefore, these six also are to be deducted, leaving only 258 (264—6) vaakh. Out of these at least 100, if not more, are most probably not Lal Ded's as has been discussed in Chapter 2.

Out of these 158 vaakh, 12 are, with variants, common between LV and NN[1], out of which one, LV 92, is probably not Lal Ded's; five are common between BBL and NN[2]; three between KN and NN[3]; three between WC and NN[4]; and 12 between AK and NN[5] out of which only four Nos. 7,25,70,72 are probably Lal Ded's. Out of these 35 vaakh which are ascribed by someone or other to Lal Ded, only 15 are probably hers, 20 are not. The remaining 138 are translated into English and listed in the Concordance.

J. L. Kaul

1. Compare LV, 4, 43. 82, 86, 87, 88, 90. 92, 96, 97, 98 and 107 with NN. 207, 179; 213, 206, 199, 217, 242, 224, 225, 200 and 186 respectively;
2. BBL, 1, 4, 5, 6, 8 and NN. 213, 180, 195, 140, 212 respectively.
3. KN, Pages 150 and 102 and NN. 137, 246, 244 respectively;
4. WC, 78, 83, 100 and NN. 202, 231, 135 respectively; and
5. AK, 46, 7, 14a, 25, 26, 36, 39, 49, 64, 65, 70, 72 and NN, 251, 221, 223, 172, 1, 165, 251, 229, 98, 177 and 210 respectively.

CONCORDANCE

Concordance of the *vaakh* in LV (*Lallā-Vākyāni* of Grierson); AK (Anand Kaul's *Lalla Yogishwari*), WC (*Waakh Lalla Īshwari* by A. K. Wanchoo and S. N. Charagi) and LD, the present edition of *Lal Ḍed.*

Note : In columns, under LV/AK, figures without any accompanying letters refer to *vaakh* numbers in LV, while the *vaakh* numbers from AK bear the letter *a*, e. g., *106* means *vaakh* number 106 in LV, and *a65* means *vaakh* number 65 in AK.

LD	LV/AK	WC	LD	LV/AK	WC
1	106	66	8	41	8
2	67	...	9	83	116
3	a65	138	10	96	144
4	a19	198	11	97	147
5	98	9	12	73	126
6	95	107	13	74	127
7	19	4	14	a20	200

LD	LV/AK	WC	LD	LV/AK	WC
15	107	199	34	a69	...
16	66	124	35	88	...
17	87	117	36	43	41
18	a64	162	37	71	166
19	a12	150	38	21	44
20	a72	134	39	18	3
21	94	113	40	20	50
22	62	176	41	23	73
23	108	121	42	a38	168
24	a18	112	43	a38	169
25	a75	131	44	a49	156
26	a7	6	45	a6, 51	51,152
27	a25	60	46	a53	155
28	a70	122	47	a52	153
29	72	43	48	12	93
30	27	55	49	61	161
31	a23	62	50	a24	18
32	a23	63	51	37	71
33	28	74	52	26	57

LD	LV/AK	WC	LD	LV/AK	WC
53	70	125	72	34	1
54	a29	21	73	8	90
55	a29	25	74	48	39
56	a16	114	75	a36	...
57	a60	195	76	29	91
58	a40	163	77	51	32
59	a39	133	78	52	98
60	77	...	79	53	85
61	10	89	80	80	132
62	63	...	81	54	97
63	a59	...	82	a61	194
64	24	94	83	16	58
65	a34	188	84	46	11
66	17	34	85	9	49
67	45	23	86	49	40
68	39	22	87	a33	186
69	40	24	88	105	...
70	42	28	89	11	48
71	43	36	90	30	84

LD	LV/AK	WC	LD	LV/AK	WC
91	69	...	110	65	192
92	104	197	111	32	26
93	25	96	112	38	56
94	82	17	113	47	42
95	56	86	114	50	47
96	57	45	115	81	...
97	3	180	116	a5	5
98	4	33	117	22	35
99	60	31	118	6	46
100	31	38	119	78	109
101	75	128	120	79	110
102	76	129	121	14	95
103	a63	193	122	15	87
104	35	92	123	a26	68
105	102-3	183-4	124	a54	175
106	68	177	125	a15	143
107	36	37	126	a66	136
108	55	27	127	109	12
109	64	64	128	13	54

CONCORDANCE

LD	LV/AK	WC	LD	LV/AK	WC
129	7	29	134	2	88
130	68	99	135	59	30
131	a71	123	136	44	72
132	5	70	137	93	...
133	1	2	138	58	174

LAL DED, the Kashmiri saint-poetess of the fourteenth century, irradiated an influence, impalpable but deep, which had a transforming power, of engendering purity and human brotherliness. Her message found a response among the people irrespective of caste and creed. Her *Vaakh* established a tradition of harmony and tolerance which is our priceless heritage. There is not a Kashmiri, Hindu or Musalman, who has not some of her *Vaakh* on the tip of his tongue. Her *Vaakh* are pithy poems containing spiritual experience documented in a form which is of immense value to the seeker. They are 'inspired speech'. Lal Ded was the progenitor of modern Kashmiri. She is the first among the moderns not only chronologically but in the modern quality of interrogation and expostulation in her poetry. Her poetry is modern because it comes alive for us even today.

Prof. J. L. Kaul, scholar of Kashmiri language and literature, has given his reappraisal of Lal Ded in this work, along with select translations of her *Vaakh*. Prof. J. L. Kaul was a member of the Executive Board and the Convener of the Kashmiri Advisory Board of the Sahitya Akademi for several years.

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